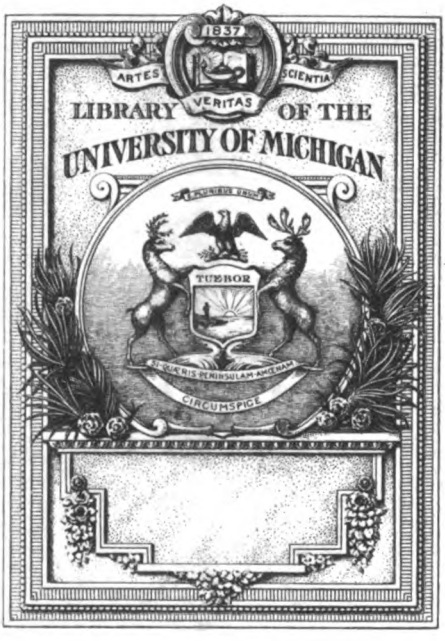
B 1,468,540


1837
ARTES
SCIENTIA
VERITAS
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

AP
A
.S89

THE

STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly

Vol. LXVII

JANUARY TO JUNE

London:

GEORGE NEWNES, LTD., 8—11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND EXETER STREET, STRAND.

1924

INDEX.

PAGE

ACID TEST, THE .. .. *Austin Philips.* 262
Illustrations by John Campbell.

ACROSTICS 23, 168, 252, 419, 499, 584

ADVENTURE OF THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, THE .. .. .. *A. Conan Doyle.* 3
Illustrations by H. K. Elcock.

AUTHORS OF TO-DAY, SOME FAMOUS .. .. .. *Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott.*
AUMONIER, STACY 302
BENNETT, ARNOLD 304
MAXWELL, W. B. 299
Illustrations from Photographs.

BOERS, MY ESCAPE FROM THE.—PART II. .. *The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill.* 14
Illustrations by Ernest Prater and from Photographs.

BURIED TREASURE OF ONE-EYE GIBB, THE .. .. *James Barr.* 253
Illustrations by E. G. Oakdale.

CHESTER FORGETS HIMSELF .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 462
Illustrations by A. Wallis Mills.

CONFESSORS .. .. *Perceval Gibbon.* 575
Illustrations by E. G. Oakdale.

CONJURING TRICKS ARE INVENTED, HOW 53
AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. HENRY BATE.
Illustrations from Photographs.

CRISIS, THE .. .. *William Caine.* 211
Illustrations by René Bull.

CROSS ON THE MATTERHORN, THE .. .. *C. Gos.* 169
Illustrations by A. Gilbert, R.O.I.

DANCING, HUMOURS OF .. .. *Fenn Sherie.* 500
Illustrations from Drawings.

DETECTIVE, A GREAT SCIENTIFIC .. .. *Harry A. Stewart.* 588
Illustrations from Photographs.

ELIZABETH'S MUSICIAN .. .. *Florence A. Kilpatrick.* 585
Illustrations by Robin.

EXIT OF BATTLING BILLSON, THE .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 71
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

"FINING POT IS FOR SILVER——, THE" .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 610
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.

FREDDIE FINDS HIMSELF .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 184
Illustrations by John Campbell.

GALLERY IN THE WORLD, THE BEST PICTURE .. .. .. *Frank Rutter.* 389
THE CENTENARY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY.
Illustrations from Photographs.

GIRL WHO SAID "PLEASE," THE .. .. *J. J. Bell.* 412
Illustrations by Treyer Evans.

HEART OF A GOOF, THE .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 345
Illustrations by A. Wallis Mills.

INTO THE BLUE .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 109
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.

PAGE

JOB FOR MR. PRINT, A .. .. *Basil Macdonald Hastings* 307
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

JOKE-HUNTER, TRIALS OF A .. .. *L. Raven-Hill* 604
Illustrations from Drawings by the Author.

KITCHEN COMPANY .. .. *W. W. Jacobs.* 227
Illustrations by Robin.

KREISLER, HERR, TALKS 178
Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.

LLOYD, HAROLD 371
A PERSONAL "CLOSE-UP" OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST LAUGHTER-MAKERS.
Illustrations from Photographs.

MAN AND A MOUSE, A .. .. *Edward Woodward.* 506
Illustrations by E. Verpilleux.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES .. *A. Conan Doyle.* 84, 121, 234, 334, 441, 563
Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.

MENDLEAN APOLLO, THE .. .. *Phil Forsyth.* 597
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

MIDNIGHT AIR MAIL, THE .. .. *Harry Harper.* 288
Illustrations by E. Verpilleux.

MISSING LINE, THE .. .. *"Sapper" (H. C. McNeile).* 323
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

NATIONAL GALLERY, CENTENARY OF THE .. .. *Frank Rutter.* 389
Illustrations from Photographs.

NEW MEMBER, THE .. .. *H. A. Vachell.* 630
Illustrations by S. Abbey.

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES .. .. *W. L. George.* 554
Illustrations by John Campbell.

ONE DROP OF MOONSHINE .. .. *John Russell.* 62
Illustrations by Ugo Matania.

PARTS, HOW I BUILD UP MY 475
A SYMPOSIUM OF WELL-KNOWN COMEDY STARS.
Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.

PERPLEXITIES .. .. *Henry F. Dudeney.* 105, 196, 320, 424, 516, 638
Illustrations from Diagrams.

PERSISTENT MOTHER, THE .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 430
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

PHILANDERER, THE .. .. *Mrs. Belloc Lowndes.* 452
Illustrations by John Campbell.

PLAIN JANE .. .. *H. A. Vachell.* 379
Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.

PORTERHOUSE STEAK, THE .. .. *"Sapper" (H. C. McNeile).* 215
Illustrations by H. T. Coller.

PORTRAITS IN PENCIL AND PEN .. .. *Walter Tittle.*
BEATTY, LORD 550
CONRAD, JOSEPH 546
LOCKE, W. J. 552
Illustrations from Drawings from Life made at sittings specially given to the Artist.

PRISON, REMARKABLE ESCAPES FROM .. .. *Charles Kingston.* 205
Illustrations by Charles Crombie.

REMINISCENCES AND INTERVIEWS:—
DAVIES, BEN 624
KREISLER, HERR 178
LLOYD, HAROLD 371
WALPOLE, HUGH 357

PAGE

REX MAGNUS .. .. *Harold Steevens.* 197
Illustrations by Norah Schlegel.

RODNEY FAILS TO QUALIFY .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 276
Illustrations by A. Wallis Mills.

SCIENCES, THE GIFTS OF THE NEW .. .. *H. G. Wells.* 152
Illustrations from Drawings and a Photograph.

SCRAP OF PAPER, A .. .. "*Sapper*" (*H. C. McNeile*). 44
Illustrations by Balliol Salmon.

SENTENCE OF DEATH .. ..*Gladys St. John-Loe.* 363
Illustrations by E. F. Sherie.

SINNER, THE .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 485
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

SONG, FORTY YEARS OF .. .. *Ben Davies.* 624
Illustrations from Photographs and a Drawing.

SONG OF FRENCH ROADS, A .. .. *Rudyard Kipling.* 426
Illustrations by Howard K. Elcock.

STRONGHEART: THE WONDER-DOG OF THE FILMS .. *Richard D. S. McMillan.* 517
Illustrations from Photographs.

TELEGRAPHY AND TELEPHONY, THE HUMAN SIDE OF .. *John Lee, C.B.E.* 420
Illustrations from Drawings.

TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART., THE. *E. Phillips Oppenheim.*
No. 9.—THE BORGIA TOUCH 97
No. 10.—THE DEAD MAN'S TALE 141
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.

THING I MOST ENJOYED DOING, THE 270
A SYMPOSIUM OF EMINENT PEOPLE.
Illustrations from Photographs.

TIME BALANCE, THE .. ..*Gladys St. John-Loe.* 523
Illustrations by F. E. Hiley.

TRAP, THE .. .. *Myra Sawhill.* 312
Illustrations by Graham Simmons.

UKRIDGE ROUNDS A NASTY CORNER .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 132
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

VALLEY OF THE SHADOW, THE .. .. .. "*Sapper*" (*H. C. McNeile*). 535
Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.

WALPOLE, HUGH .. .. *An Interview by Gladys Beattie Crozier.* 357
Illustrations from Drawings and a Photograph.

WELL LOST? .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 24
Illustrations by Norah Schlegel.

WELLS, H. G., PROPHESIES 152
Illustrations from Photographs and a Drawing.

"WHAT IS MY SECRET?" .. .. *Denis Mackail.* 159
Illustrations by F. E. Hiley.

WHEN YISO CAME TO LIMEHOUSE .. .. *Nellie Tom-Gallon and Calder Wilson.* 36
Illustrations by John Campbell.

WITNESS, THE .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 398
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.

WRONG NUMBER, THE .. .. *Torquil Macleod.* 247
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.

Printed by NEWNES & PEARSON PRINTING CO., LTD., Exmoor Street, Ladbroke Grove, W.10, for MESSRS. GEORGE NEWNES, LTD., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

PLETE NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STOR
e Adventure of the Sussex Vampire

JAN 12 1924

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

A TIP FOR THE TONGUE

ALSO

CONAN DOYLE ON SHERLOCK HOLMES

IN HIS REMINISCENCES

PERIODICAL ROOM
JAN 12 1924
ONE SH

The ideal SWEETS *for* HOGMANAY

By whatever name you call it—New Year, Hogmanay or just January 1—the joyous Xmas spirit persists. You can't get away from it and won't want to, if you are wise.

The children are still at home: there are parties and theatres, and lots of fun. This "spirit" has been "caught" and embodied in the delicious form of CLARNICO CONFECTIONERY; and in none of it more successfully than in the two following masterpieces of subtle blending:

CLARNICO *CHOCOLATE* LILY BRAZILS

These are the famous Lily Brazils covered with a coating of the finest chocolate. They are extra delicious and eminently suitable for New Year festivities.

CLARNICO LILY BRAZILS

These are the finest, most nourishing pieces of sugar-butter-cream with brazil-nut embedded in them. Each one is wrapped cleanly and daintily.

9D.. PER ¼-LB.

At this price they represent the finest value in chocolates you can possibly get.

Make 1924 a Lily Brazil year. And good luck to you!

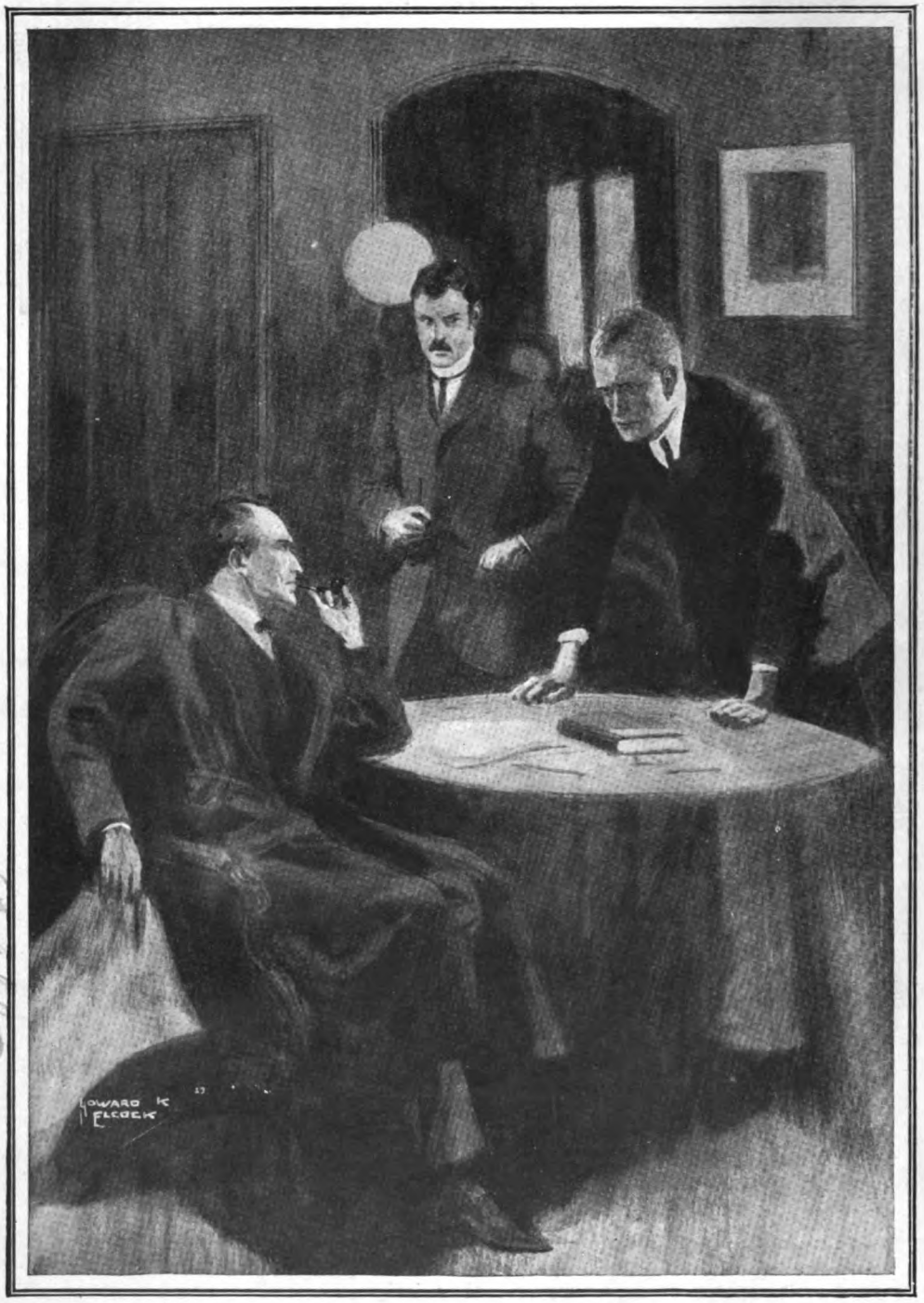
8D.. PER ¼-LB.

Eat them yourself - send them as gifts

CLARKE NICKOLLS *and* COOMBS Ltd

VICTORIA PARK LONDON

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
January, 1924.



"FOR GOD'S SAKE, MR. HOLMES, GIVE ME SOME ADVICE, FOR I AM AT MY WITS' END."

(See page 6.)

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY H. K. ELCOCK

HOLMES had read carefully a note which the last post had brought him. Then, with the dry chuckle which was his nearest approach to a laugh, he tossed it over to me.

"For a mixture of the modern and the mediæval, of the practical and of the wildly fanciful, I think this is surely the limit," said he. "What do you make of it, Watson?"

I read as follows:—

46, Old Jewry,
Nov. 19th.

Re Vampires.

Sir,

Our client, Mr. Robert Ferguson, of Ferguson and Muirhead, tea brokers, of Mincing Lane, has made some inquiry from us in a communication of even date concerning vampires. As our firm specializes entirely upon the assessment of machinery the matter hardly comes within our purview, and we have therefore recommended Mr. Ferguson to call upon you and lay the matter before you. We have not forgotten your successful action in the case of Matilda Briggs.

We are, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
MORRISON, MORRISON, AND DODD.
per E. J. C.

"Matilda Briggs was not the name of a young woman, Watson," said Holmes, in a reminiscent voice. "It was a ship which is associated with the giant rat of Sumatra, a story for which the world is not yet prepared. But what do we know about vampires? Does it come within our purview either? Anything is better than stagnation, but really we seem to have been switched on to a Grimm's fairy tale. Make a long arm, Watson, and see what V has to say."

I leaned back and took down the great index volume to which he referred. Holmes balanced it on his knee and his eyes moved slowly and lovingly over the record of old cases, mixed with the accumulated information of a lifetime.

"Voyage of the *Gloria Scott*," he read.

Copyright, 1923, by A. Conan Doyle.

" That was a bad business. I have some recollection that you made a record of it, Watson, though I was unable to congratulate you upon the result. Victor Lynch, the forger. Venomous lizard or gila. Remarkable case, that! Vittoria, the circus belle. Vanderbilt and the Yeggman. Vipers. Vigor, the Hammersmith wonder. Hullo! Hullo! Good old index. You can't beat it. Listen to this, Watson. Vampirism in Hungary. And again, Vampires in Transylvania." He turned over the pages with eagerness, but after a short intent perusal he threw down the great book with a snarl of disappointment.

" Rubbish, Watson, rubbish! What have we to do with walking corpses who can only be held in their grave by stakes driven through their hearts? It's pure lunacy."

" But surely," said I, " the vampire was not necessarily a dead man? A living person might have the habit. I have read, for example, of the old sucking the blood of the young in order to retain their youth."

" You are right, Watson. It mentions the legend in one of these references. But are we to give serious attention to such things? This Agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. This world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply. I fear that we cannot take Mr. Robert Ferguson very seriously. Possibly this note may be from him, and may throw some light upon what is worrying him."

He took up a second letter which had lain unnoticed upon the table whilst he had been absorbed with the first. This he began to read with a smile of amusement upon his face which gradually faded away into an expression of intense interest and concentration. When he had finished he sat for some little time lost in thought with the letter dangling from his fingers. Finally, with a start, he aroused himself from his reverie.

" Cheeseman's, Lamberley. Where is Lamberley, Watson? "

" It is in Sussex, south of Horsham."

" Not very far, eh? And Cheeseman's ?"

" I know that country, Holmes. It is full of old houses which are named after the men who built them centuries ago. You get Odley's and Harvey's and Carriton's—the folk are forgotten but their names live in their houses."

" Precisely," said Holmes, coldly. It was one of the peculiarities of his proud, self-contained nature that, though he docketed any fresh information very quickly and accurately in his brain, he seldom made any acknowledgment to the giver. " I rather fancy we shall know a good deal more about Cheeseman's, Lamberley, before we are through. The letter is, as I had hoped, from Robert Ferguson. By the way, he claims acquaintance with you."

" With me! "

" You had better read it."

He handed the letter across. It was headed with the address quoted.

DEAR MR. HOLMES (it said),—I have been recommended to you by my lawyers, but indeed the matter is so extraordinarily delicate that it is most difficult to discuss. It concerns a friend for whom I am acting. This gentleman married some five years ago a Peruvian lady, the daughter of a Peruvian merchant, whom he had met in connection with the importation of nitrates. The lady was very beautiful, but the fact of her foreign birth and of her alien religion always caused a separation of interests and of feelings between husband and wife, so that after a time his love may have cooled towards her and he may have come to regard their union as a mistake. He felt there were sides of her character which he could never explore or understand. This was the more painful as she was as loving a wife as a man could have—to all appearance absolutely devoted.

Now for the point which I will make more plain when we meet. Indeed, this note is merely to give you a general idea of the situation and to ascertain whether you would care to interest yourself in the matter. The lady began to show some curious traits quite alien to her ordinarily sweet and gentle disposition. The gentleman had been married twice and he had one son by the first wife. This boy was now fifteen, a very charming and affectionate youth, though unhappily injured through an accident in childhood. Twice the wife was caught in the act of assaulting this poor lad in the most unprovoked way. Once she struck him with a stick and left a great weal on his arm.

This was a small matter, however, compared with her conduct to her own child, a dear boy just under one year of age. On one occasion about a month ago this child had been left by its nurse for a few minutes. A loud cry from the baby, as of pain, called the nurse back. As she ran into the room she saw her employer, the lady, leaning over the baby and apparently biting his neck. There was a small wound in the neck, from which a stream of blood had escaped. The nurse was so horrified that she wished to call the husband, but the lady implored her not to do so, and actually gave her five pounds as a price for her silence.

No explanation was ever given, and for the moment the matter was passed over.

It left, however, a terrible impression upon the nurse's mind, and from that time she began to watch her mistress closely, and to keep a closer guard upon the baby, whom she tenderly loved. It seemed to her that even as she watched the mother, so the mother watched her, and that every time she was compelled to leave the baby alone the mother was waiting to get at it. Day and night the nurse covered the child, and day and night the silent, watchful mother seemed to be lying in wait as a wolf waits for a lamb. It must read most incredible to you, and yet I beg you to take it seriously, for a child's life and a man's sanity may depend upon it.

"Hullo! Hullo! Good old index. You can't beat it. Listen to this, Watson."

At last there came one dreadful day when the facts could no longer be concealed from the husband. The nurse's nerve had given way; she could stand the strain no longer, and she made a clean breast of it all to the man. To him it seemed as wild a tale as it may now seem to you. He knew his wife to be a loving wife, and, save for the assaults upon her stepson, a loving mother. Why, then, should she wound her own dear little baby? He told the nurse that she was dreaming, that her suspicions were those of a lunatic, and that such libels upon her mistress were not to be tolerated. Whilst they were talking, a sudden cry of pain was heard. Nurse and master rushed together to the nursery. Imagine his feelings, Mr. Holmes, as he saw his wife

rise from a kneeling position beside the cot, and saw blood upon the child's exposed neck and upon the sheet. With a cry of horror, he turned his wife's face to the light and saw blood all round her lips. It was she—she beyond all question—who had drunk the poor baby's blood.

So the matter stands. She is now confined to her room. There has been no explanation. The husband is half demented. He knows, and I know, little of Vampirism beyond the name. We had thought it was some wild tale of foreign parts. And yet here in the very heart of the English Sussex—well, all this can be discussed with you in the morning. Will you see me? Will you use your great powers in aiding a distracted man? If so, kindly wire to Ferguson, Cheeseman's, Lamberley, and I will be at your rooms by ten o'clock.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT FERGUSON.

P.S.—I believe your friend Watson played Rugby for Blackheath when I was three-quarter for Richmond. It is the only personal introduction which I can give.

"Of course I remember him," said I, as I laid down the letter. "Big Bob Ferguson, the finest three-quarter Richmond ever had. He was always a good-natured chap. It is like him to be so concerned over a friend's case."

Holmes looked at me thoughtfully and shook his head.

"I never get your limits, Watson," said he. "There are unexplored possibilities about you. Take a wire down, like a good fellow. 'Will examine your case with pleasure.'"

"*Your* case!"

"We must not let him think that this Agency is a home for the weak-minded. Of course it is his case. Send him that wire and let the matter rest till morning."

PROMPTLY at ten o'clock next morning Ferguson strode into our room. I had remembered him as a long, slab-sided man with loose limbs and a fine turn of speed, which had carried him round many an opposing back. There is surely nothing in life more painful than to meet the wreck of a fine athlete whom one has known in his prime. His great frame had fallen in, his flaxen hair was scanty, and his shoulders were bowed. I fear that I roused corresponding emotions in him.

"Hullo, Watson," said he, and his voice was still deep and hearty. "You don't look quite the man you did when I threw you over the ropes into the crowd at the Old Deer Park. I expect I have changed a bit also. But it's this last day or two that has aged me. I see by your telegram, Mr. Holmes, that it is no use my pretending to be anyone's deputy."

"It is simpler to deal direct," said Holmes.

"Of course it is. But you can imagine how difficult it is when you are speaking of the one woman whom you are bound to protect and help. What can I do? How am I to go to the police with such a story? And yet the kiddies have got to be protected. Is it madness, Mr. Holmes? Is it something in the blood? Have you any similar case in your experience? For God's sake, give me some advice, for I am at my wits' end."

"Very naturally, Mr. Ferguson. Now sit here and pull yourself together and give me a few clear answers. I can assure you that I am very far from being at my wits' end, and that I am confident we shall find some solution. First of all, tell me what steps you have taken. Is your wife still near the children?"

"We had a dreadful scene. She is a most loving woman, Mr. Holmes. If ever a woman loved a man with all her heart and soul, she loves me. She was cut to the heart that I should have discovered this horrible, this incredible secret. She would not even speak. She gave no answer to my reproaches, save to gaze at me with a sort of wild, despairing look in her eyes. Then she rushed to her room and locked herself in. Since then she has refused to see me. She has a maid who was with her before her marriage, Dolores by name—a friend rather than a servant. She takes her food to her."

"Then the child is in no immediate danger?"

"Mrs. Mason, the nurse, has sworn that she will not leave it night or day. I can absolutely trust her. I am more uneasy about poor little Jack, for, as I told you in my note, he has twice been assaulted by her."

"But never wounded?"

"No; she struck him savagely. It is the more terrible as he is a poor little inoffensive cripple." Ferguson's gaunt features softened as he spoke of his boy. "You would think that the dear lad's condition would soften anyone's heart. A fall in childhood and a twisted spine, Mr. Holmes. But the dearest, most loving heart within."

Holmes had picked up the letter of yesterday and was reading it over. "What other inmates are there in your house, Mr. Ferguson?"

"Two servants who have not been long

with us. One stable hand, Michael, who sleeps in the house. My wife, myself, my boy Jack, baby, Dolores, and Mrs. Mason. That is all."

"I gather that you did not know your wife well at the time of your marriage?"

"I had only known her a few weeks."

"How long had this maid Dolores been with her?"

"Some years."

"Then your wife's character would really be better known by Dolores than by you?"

"Yes, you may say so."

Holmes made a note.

"I fancy," said he, "that I may be of more use at Lamberley than here. It is eminently a case for personal investigation. If the lady remains in her room, our presence could not annoy or inconvenience her. Of course, we would stay at the inn."

Ferguson gave a gesture of relief.

"It is what I hoped, Mr. Holmes. There is an excellent train at two from Victoria, if you could come."

"Of course we could come. There is a lull at present. I can give you my undivided energies. Watson, of course, comes with us. But there are one or two points upon which I wish to be very sure before I start. This unhappy lady, as I understand it, has appeared to assault both the children, her own baby and your little son?"

"That is so."

"But the assaults take different forms, do they not? She has beaten your son."

"Once with a stick and once very savagely with her hands."

"Did she give no explanation why she struck him?"

"None, save that she hated him. Again and again she said so."

"Well, that is not unknown among stepmothers. A posthumous jealousy, we will say. Is the lady jealous by nature?"

"Yes, she is very jealous—jealous with all the strength of her fiery tropical love."

"But the boy—he is fifteen, I understand, and probably very developed in mind, since his body has been circumscribed in action. Did he give you no explanation of these assaults?"

"No; he declared there was no reason."

"Were they good friends at other times?"

"No; there was never any love between them."

"Yet you say he is affectionate?"

"Never in the world could there be so devoted a son. My life is his life. He is absorbed in what I say or do."

Once again Holmes made a note. For some time he sat lost in thought.

"No doubt you and the boy were great comrades before this second marriage. You were thrown very close together, were you not?"

"Very much so."

"And the boy, having so affectionate a nature, was devoted, no doubt, to the memory of his mother?"

"Most devoted."

"He would certainly seem to be a most interesting lad. There is one other point about these assaults. Were the strange attacks upon the baby and the assaults upon your son at the same period?"

"In the first case it was so. It was as if some frenzy had seized her, and she had vented her rage upon both. In the second case it was only Jack who suffered. Mrs. Mason had no complaint to make about the baby."

"That certainly complicates matters."

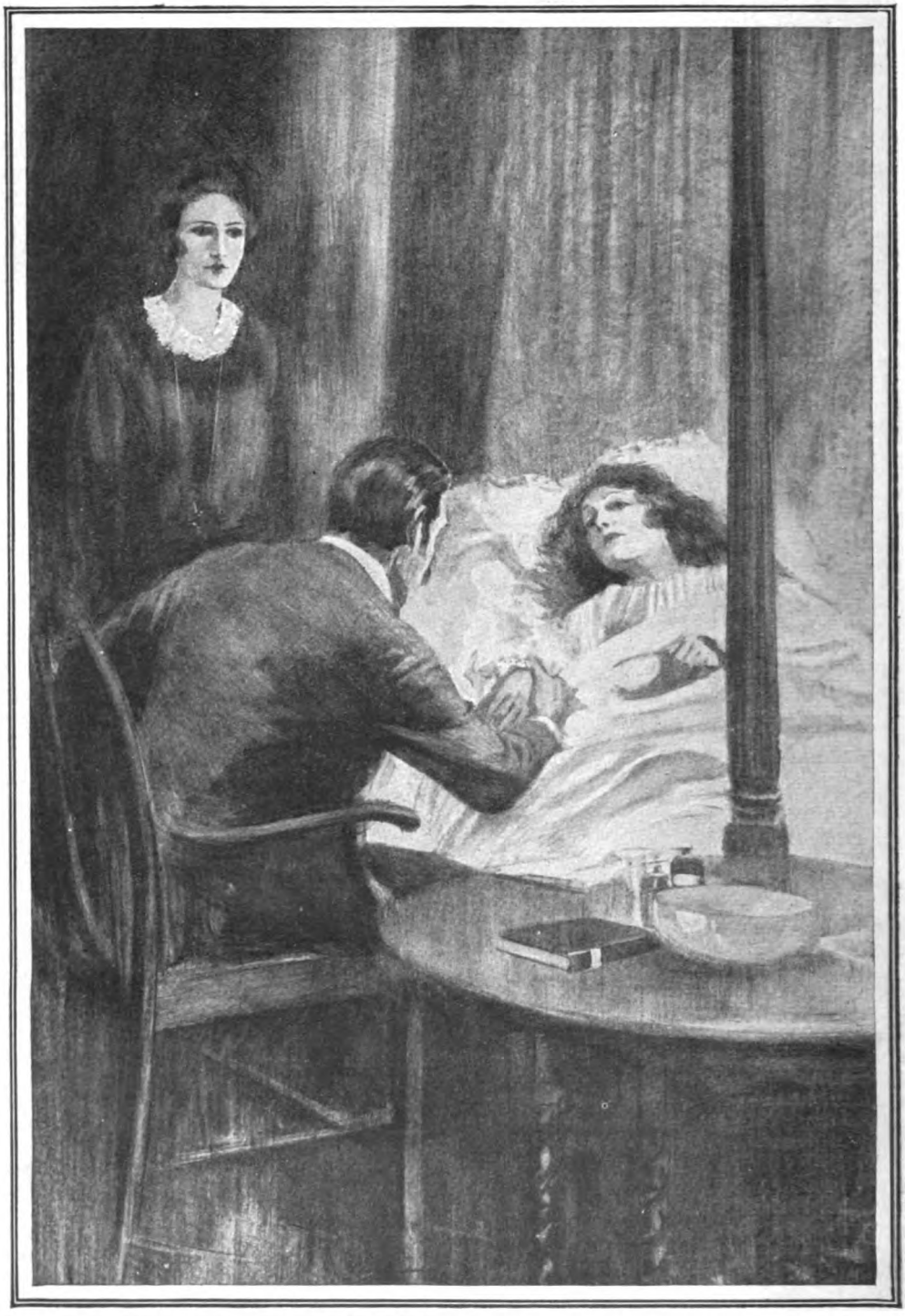
"I don't quite follow you, Mr. Holmes."

"Possibly not. One forms provisional theories and waits for time or fuller knowledge to explode them. A bad habit, Mr. Ferguson; but human nature is weak. I fear that your old friend here has given an exaggerated view of my scientific methods. However, I will only say at the present stage that your problem does not appear to me to be insoluble, and that you may expect to find us at Victoria at two o'clock."

IT was evening of a dull, foggy November day when, having left our bags at the Chequers, Lamberley, we drove through the Sussex clay of a long winding lane, and finally reached the isolated and ancient farmhouse in which Ferguson dwelt. It was a large, straggling building, very old in the centre, very new at the wings, with towering Tudor chimneys and a lichen-spotted, high-pitched roof of Horsham slabs. The door-steps were worn into curves, and the ancient tiles which lined the porch were marked with the rebus of a cheese and a man, after the original builder. Within, the ceilings were corrugated with heavy oaken beams, and the uneven floors sagged into sharp curves. An odour of age and decay pervaded the whole crumbling building.

There was one very large central room, into which Ferguson led us. Here, in a huge old-fashioned fireplace with an iron screen behind it dated 1670, there blazed and spluttered a splendid log fire.

The room, as I gazed round, was a most singular mixture of dates and of places. The half-panelled walls may well have belonged to the original yeoman farmer of the seventeenth century. They were ornamented, however, on the lower part by a line of well-chosen modern water-colours; while above, where yellow plaster took the place of oak, there was hung a fine collection of South American utensils and weapons, which



The woman turned her flushed and handsome face towards me. "Where is my husband?" she asked.

had been brought, no doubt, by the Peruvian lady upstairs. Holmes rose, with that quick curiosity which sprang from his eager mind, and examined them with some care. He returned with his eyes full of thought.

"Hullo!" he cried. "Hullo!"

A spaniel had lain in a basket in the corner. It came slowly forward towards its master, walking with difficulty. Its hind legs moved irregularly and its tail was on the ground. It licked Ferguson's hand.

"What is it, Mr. Holmes?"

"The dog. What's the matter with it?"

"That's what puzzled the vet. A sort of paralysis. Spinal meningitis, he thought. But it is passing. He'll be all right soon—won't you, Carlo?"

A shiver of assent passed through the drooping tail. The dog's mournful eyes passed from one of us to the other. He knew that we were discussing his case.

"Did it come on suddenly?"

"In a single night."

"How long ago?"

"It may have been four months ago."

"Very remarkable. Very suggestive."

"What do you see in it, Mr. Holmes?"

"A confirmation of what I had already thought."

"For God's sake, what *do* you think, Mr. Holmes? It may be a mere intellectual puzzle to you, but it is life and death to me! My wife a would-be murderer—my child in constant danger! Don't play with me, Mr. Holmes. It is too terribly serious."

The big Rugby three-quarter was trembling all over. Holmes put his hand soothingly upon his arm.

"I fear that there is pain for you, Mr. Ferguson, whatever the solution may be," said he. "I would spare you all I can. I cannot say more for the instant, but before I leave this house I hope I may have something definite."

"Please God you may! If you will excuse me, gentlemen, I will go up to my wife's room and see if there has been any change."

HE was away some minutes, during which Holmes resumed his examination of the curiosities upon the wall. When our host returned it was clear from his downcast face that he had made no progress. He brought with him a tall, slim, brown-faced girl.

"The tea is ready, Dolores," said Ferguson. "See that your mistress has everything she can wish."

"She verra ill," cried the girl, looking with indignant eyes at her master. "She no ask for food. She verra ill. She need doctor. I frightened stay alone with her without doctor."

Ferguson looked at me with a question in his eyes.

"I should be so glad if I could be of use."

"Would your mistress see Dr. Watson?"

"I take him. I no ask leave. She needs doctor."

"Then I'll come with you at once."

I followed the girl, who was quivering with strong emotion, up the staircase and down an ancient corridor. At the end was an iron-clamped and massive door. It struck me as I looked at it that if Ferguson tried to force his way to his wife he would find it no easy matter. The girl drew a key from her pocket, and the heavy oaken planks creaked upon their old hinges. I passed in and she swiftly followed, fastening the door behind her.

On the bed a woman was lying who was clearly in a high fever. She was only half conscious, but as I entered she raised a pair of frightened but beautiful eyes and glared at me in apprehension. Seeing a stranger, she appeared to be relieved, and sank back with a sigh upon the pillow. I stepped up to her with a few reassuring words, and she lay still while I took her pulse and temperature. Both were high, and yet my impression was that the condition was rather that of mental and nervous excitement than of any actual seizure.

"She lie like that one day, two day. I 'fraid she die," said the girl.

The woman turned her flushed and handsome face towards me.

"Where is my husband?"

"He is below, and would wish to see you."

"I will not see him. I will not see him." Then she seemed to wander off into delirium. "A fiend! A fiend! Oh, what shall I do with this devil?"

"Can I help you in any way?"

"No. No one can help. It is finished. All is destroyed. Do what I will, all is destroyed."

The woman must have some strange delusion. I could not see honest Bob Ferguson in the character of fiend or devil.

"Madame," I said, "your husband loves you dearly. He is deeply grieved at this happening."

Again she turned on me those glorious eyes.

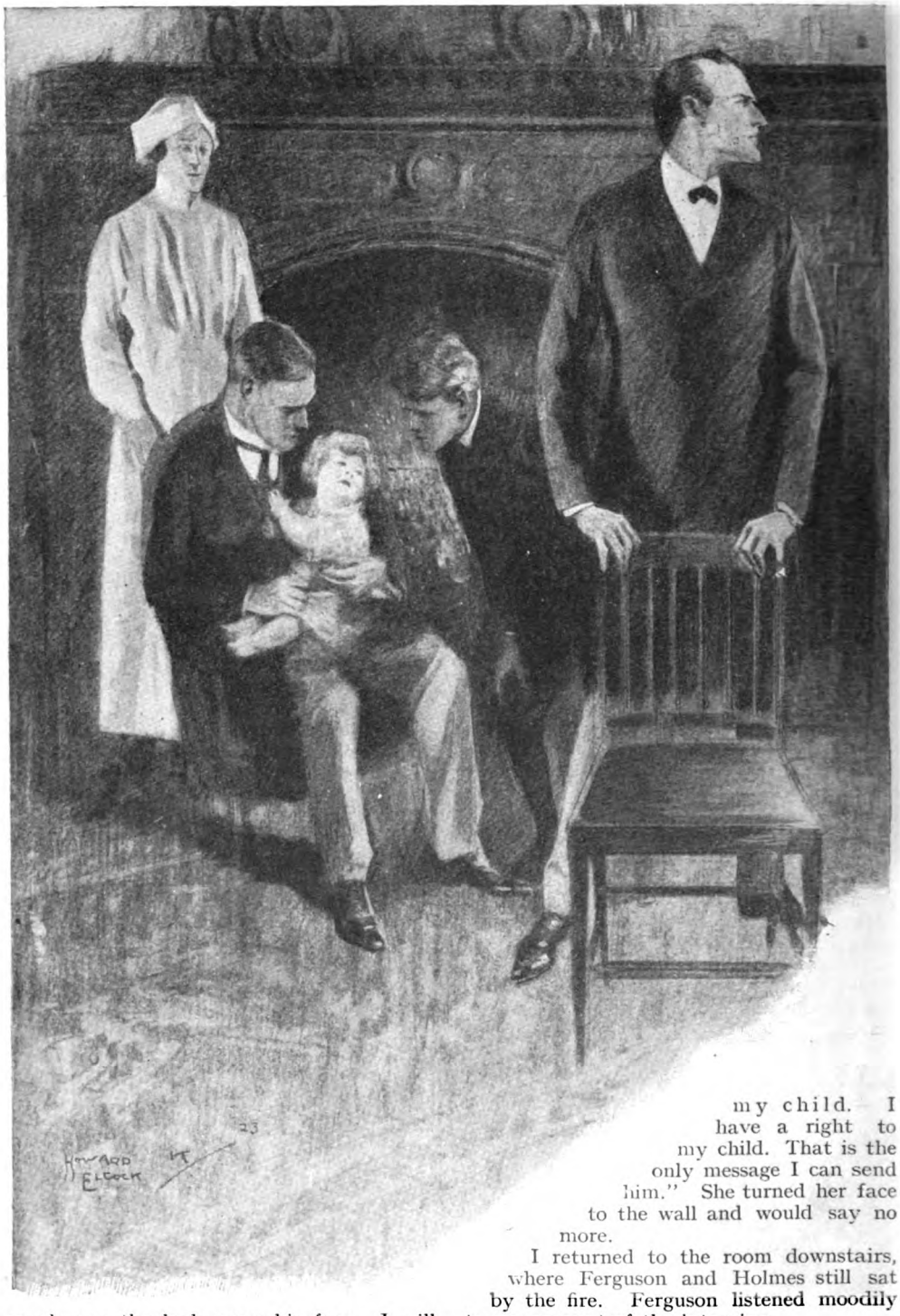
"He loves me. Yes. But do I not love him? Do I not love him even to sacrifice myself rather than break his dear heart. That is how I love him. And yet he could think of me—he could speak of me so."

"He is full of grief, but he cannot understand."

"No, he cannot understand. But he should trust."

"Will you not see him?" I suggested.

"No, no; I cannot forget those terrible



words nor the look upon his face. I will not see him. Go now. You can do nothing for me. Tell him only one thing. I want my child. I have a right to my child. That is the only message I can send him." She turned her face to the wall and would say no more.

I returned to the room downstairs, where Ferguson and Holmes still sat by the fire. Ferguson listened moodily to my account of the interview.

"How can I send her the child?" he said. "How do I know what strange

At this moment I chanced to glance at Holmes, and saw a most singular intentness in his expression. His eyes were fixed with eager curiosity upon something at the other side of the room.

impulse might come upon her? How can I ever forget how she rose from beside it with its blood upon her lips?" He shuddered at the recollection. "The child is safe with Mrs. Mason, and there he must remain."

A smart maid, the only modern thing which we had seen in the house, had brought in some tea. As she was serving it the door opened and a youth entered the room. He was a remarkable lad, pale-faced and fair-haired, with excitable light blue eyes which blazed into a sudden flame of emotion and joy as they rested upon his father. He rushed forward and threw his arms round his neck with the abandon of a loving girl.

"Oh, daddy," he cried, "I did not know that you were due yet. I should have been here to meet you. Oh, I am so glad to see you!"

Ferguson gently disengaged himself from the embrace with some little show of embarrassment.

"Dear old chap," said he, patting the flaxen head with a very tender hand. "I came early because my friends, Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson, have been persuaded to come down and spend an evening with us."

"Is that Mr. Holmes, the detective?"

"Yes."

The youth looked at us with a very penetrating and, as it seemed to me, unfriendly gaze.

"What about your other child, Mr. Ferguson?" asked Holmes. "Might we make the acquaintance of the baby?"

"Ask Mrs. Mason to bring baby down," said Ferguson. The boy went off with a curious, shambling gait which told my surgical eyes that he was suffering from a weak spine. Presently he returned, and behind him came a tall, gaunt woman bearing in her arms a very beautiful child, dark-eyed, golden-haired, a wonderful mixture of the Saxon and the Latin. Ferguson was evidently devoted to it, for he took it into his arms and fondled it most tenderly.

"Fancy anyone having the heart to hurt him," he muttered, as he glanced down at the small, angry red pucker upon the cherub throat.

It was at this moment that I chanced to glance at Holmes, and saw a most singular intentness in his expression. His face was as set as if it had been carved out of old ivory, and his eyes, which had glanced for a moment at father and child, were now fixed with eager curiosity upon something at the other side of the room. Following his gaze I could only guess that he was looking out through the window at the melancholy, dripping garden. It is true that a shutter had half-closed outside and obstructed the view, but none the less it was certainly at the window that Holmes was fixing his concentrated attention. Then he smiled and his eyes came back to the baby. On its chubby neck there was this small puckered mark. Without speaking, Holmes examined it with care. Finally he shook one of the dimpled fists which waved in front of him.

"Good-bye, little man. You have made a strange start in life. Nurse, I should wish to have a word with you in private."

He took her aside and spoke earnestly for a few minutes. I only heard the last words, which were: "Your anxiety will soon, I hope, be set at rest." The woman, who seemed to be a sour, silent kind of creature, withdrew with the child.

"What is Mrs. Mason like?" asked Holmes.

"Not very prepossessing externally, as you can see, but a heart of gold, and devoted to the child."

"Do you like her, Jack?" Holmes turned suddenly upon the boy. His expressive mobile face shadowed over, and he shook his head.

"Jacky has very strong likes and dislikes," said Ferguson, putting his arm round the boy. "Luckily I am one of his likes."

The boy cooed and nestled his head upon his father's breast. Ferguson gently disengaged him.

"Run away, little Jacky," said he, and he watched his son with loving eyes until he disappeared. "Now, Mr. Holmes," he continued, when the boy was gone, "I really feel that I have brought you on a fool's errand, for what can you possibly do, save give me your sympathy? It must be an exceedingly delicate and complex affair from your point of view."

"It is certainly delicate," said my friend, with an amused smile, "but I have not been struck up to now with its complexity. It has been a case for intellectual deduction, but when this original intellectual deduction is confirmed point by point by quite a number of independent incidents, then the subjective becomes objective and we can say confidently that we have reached our goal. I had, in fact, reached it before we left Baker Street, and the rest has merely been observation and confirmation."

Ferguson put his big hand to his furrowed forehead.

"For Heaven's sake, Holmes," he said, hoarsely, "if you can see the truth in this matter, do not keep me in suspense. How do I stand? What shall I do? I care nothing as to how you have found your facts so long as you have really got them."

"Certainly I owe you an explanation, and you shall have it. But you will permit me to handle the matter in my own way? Is the lady capable of seeing us, Watson?"

"She is ill, but she is quite rational."

"Very good. It is only in her presence that we can clear the matter up. Let us go up to her."

"She will not see me," cried Ferguson.

"Oh, yes, she will," said Holmes. He scribbled a few lines upon a sheet of paper. "You at least have the *entrée*, Watson. Will you have the goodness to give the lady this note?"

I ASCENDED again and handed the note to Dolores, who cautiously opened the door. A minute later I heard a cry from within, a cry in which joy and surprise seemed to be blended. Dolores looked out.

"She will see them. She will leesten," said she.

At my summons Ferguson and Holmes came up. As we entered the room Ferguson took a step or two towards his wife, who had raised herself in the bed, but she held out her hand to repulse him. He sank into an arm-chair, while Holmes seated himself beside him, after bowing to the lady, who looked at him with wide-eyed amazement.

"I think we can dispense with Dolores," said Holmes. "Oh, very well, madame, if you would rather she stayed I can see no objection. Now, Mr. Ferguson, I am a busy man with many calls, and my methods have to be short and direct. The swiftest surgery is the least painful. Let me first say what will ease your mind. Your wife

is a very good, a very loving, and a very ill-used woman."

Ferguson sat up with a cry of joy.

"Prove that, Mr. Holmes, and I am your debtor for ever."

"I will do so, but in doing so I must wound you deeply in another direction."

"I care nothing so long as you clear my wife. Everything on earth is insignificant compared to that."

"Let me tell you, then, the train of reasoning which passed through my mind in Baker Street. The idea of a vampire was to me absurd. Such things do not happen in criminal practice in England. And yet your observation was precise. You had seen the lady rise from beside the child's cot with the blood upon her lips."

"I did."

"Did it not occur to you that a bleeding wound may be sucked for some other purpose than to draw the blood from it? Was there not a Queen in English history who sucked such a wound to draw poison from it?"

"Poison!"

"A South American household. My instinct felt the presence of those weapons upon the wall before my eyes ever saw them. It might have been other poison, but that was what occurred to me. When I saw that little empty quiver beside the small bird-bow, it was just what I expected to see. If the child were pricked with one of those arrows dipped in curare or some other devilish drug, it would mean death if the venom were not sucked out.

"And the dog! If one were to use such a poison, would one not try it first in order to see that it had not lost its power? I did not foresee the dog, but at least I understood him and he fitted into my reconstruction.

"Now do you understand? Your wife feared such an attack. She saw it made and saved the child's life, and yet she shrank from telling you all the truth, for she knew how you loved the boy and feared lest it break your heart."

"Jacky!"

"I watched him as you fondled the child just now. His face was clearly reflected in the glass of the window where the shutter formed a background. I saw such jealousy, such cruel hatred, as I have seldom seen in a human face."

"My Jacky!"

"You have to face it, Mr. Ferguson. It is the more painful because it is a distorted love, a maniacal exaggerated love for you, and possibly for his dead mother, which has prompted his action. His very soul is consumed with hatred for this splendid child, whose health and beauty are a contrast to his own weakness."

"Good God! It is incredible!"

"Have I spoken the truth, madame?"

The lady was sobbing, with her face buried in the pillows. Now she turned to her husband.

"How could I tell you, Bob? I felt the blow it would be to you. It was better that I should wait and that it should come from some other lips than mine. When this gentleman, who seems to have powers of magic, wrote that he knew all, I was glad."

"I think a year at sea would be my prescription for Master Jacky," said Holmes, rising from his chair. "Only one thing is still clouded, madame. We can quite understand your attacks upon Master Jacky. There is a limit to a mother's patience. But how did you dare to leave the child these last two days?"

"I had told Mrs. Mason. She knew."

"Exactly. So I imagined."

Ferguson was standing by the bed, choking, his hands outstretched and quivering.

"This, I fancy, is the time for our exit, Watson," said Holmes in a whisper. "If you will take one elbow of the too faithful Dolores, I will take the other. There, now," he added, as he closed the door behind him. "I think we may leave them to settle the rest among themselves."

I HAVE only one further note of this case. It is the letter which Holmes wrote in final answer to that with which the narrative begins. It ran thus:—

Baker Street,
Nov. 21st.

Re Vampires.

Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 19th, I beg to state that I have looked into the inquiry of your client, Mr. Robert. Ferguson, of Ferguson and Muirhead, tea brokers, of Mincing Lane, and that the matter has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. With thanks for your recommendation,

I am, Sir,
Faithfully yours,
SHERLOCK HOLMES.

MY ESCAPE FROM THE BOERS

Now Told in Full for the First Time

by

THE RT. HON.
WINSTON CHURCHILL

PART II.

Last month Mr. Winston Churchill brought his narrative up to the time when, after many exciting moments and narrow escapes, he at last, through the kindness of the British manager of the Transvaal Collieries and his assistants, found himself for the time being safely concealed in a coal-mine. The concluding words of the first instalment were:—

"My four friends trooped off with their lanterns, and I was left alone. Viewed from the velvety darkness of the pit, life seemed bathed in rosy light. After the perplexity and even despair through which I had passed I counted upon freedom as certain. Instead of a humiliating recapture and long months of monotonous imprisonment, probably in the common jail, I saw myself once more rejoining the Army with a real exploit to my credit, and in that full enjoyment of freedom and keen pursuit of adventure dear to the heart of youth. In this comfortable mood, and speeded by intense fatigue, I soon slept the sleep of the just—and of the triumphant."

I DO not know how many hours I slept, but the following afternoon must have been far advanced when I found myself thoroughly awake. I put out my hand for the candle, but could feel it nowhere. I did not know what pitfalls these mining galleries might contain, so I thought it better to lie quiet on my mattress and await developments. Several hours passed before the faint gleam of a lantern showed that someone was coming. It proved to be Mr. Howard himself, armed with a chicken and other good things. He also brought several books. He asked me why I had not lighted my candle. I said I could not find it.

"Didn't you put it under the mattress?" he asked.

"No."

"Then the rats must have got it."

He told me there were swarms of rats in the mine, that some years ago he had introduced a particular kind of white rat, which was an excellent scavenger, and that these had multiplied and thriven exceedingly. He told me he had been to the house of an English doctor twenty miles away to get the chicken. He was worried at the attitude of the two Dutch servants, who were very inquisitive about the depredations upon the leg of mutton for which I had been responsible. If he could not get another chicken cooked for the next day, he would have to take double helpings on his own plate and slip the surplus into a parcel for me while the servant was out of the room. He said that inquiries were being made for me all over the district by the Boers, and that the Pretoria Government was making a tremendous fuss about my escape. The fact that there were a number of English remaining in the Middelburg mining region indicated it as a likely place for me to have turned to, and all

Copyright, 1923, by Winston Churchill.

persons of English origin were more or less suspect.

I again expressed my willingness to go on alone with a Kaffir guide and a pony, but this he utterly refused to entertain. It would take a lot of planning, he said, to get me out of the country, and I might have to stay in the mine for quite a long time.

"Here," he said, "you are absolutely safe. 'Mac'" (by which he meant one of the Scottish miners) "knows all the disused workings and places that no one else would dream of. There is one place here where the water actually touches the roof for a foot or two. If they searched the mine, Mac would dive under that with you into the workings cut off beyond the water. No one would ever think of looking there. We have frightened the Kaffirs with tales of ghosts, and, anyhow, we are watching their movements continually."

He stayed with me while I dined, and then departed, leaving me, among other things, half-a-dozen candles, which, duly warned, I tucked under my pillow and mattress.

I slept again for a long time, and woke suddenly with a feeling of movement about me. Something seemed to be pulling at my pillow. I put out my hand quickly. There was a perfect scurry. The rats were at the candles. I rescued the candles in time, and lighted one. Luckily for me, I have no horror of rats as such, and being reassured by their evident timidity, I was not particularly uneasy. All the same, the three days I passed in the mine were not among the most pleasant which my memory re-illumines. The patter of little feet and a

Mr. Howard said that inquiries were being made for me all over the district by the Boers.

perceptible sense of stir and scurry was continuous. Once I was waked up from a doze by one actually galloping across me. On the candle being lighted these beings became invisible.

The next day—if you can call it day—arrived in due course. This was the 14th December, and the third day since I had escaped from the States Model Schools. It was relieved by a visit from the two Scottish miners, with whom I had a long confabulation. I then learned, to my surprise, that the mine was only about two hundred feet deep.

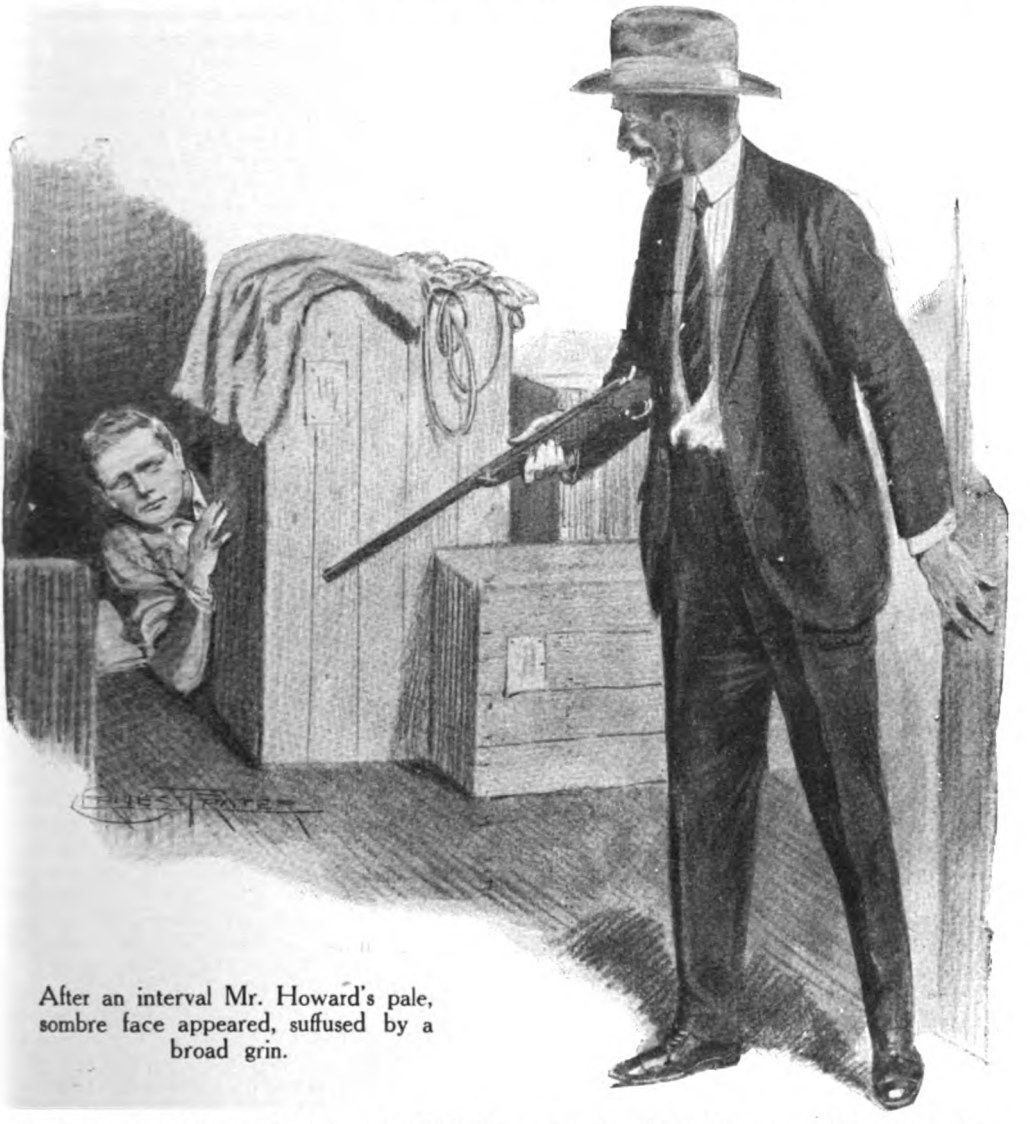
There were parts of it, said Mac, where one could see the daylight up a disused shaft. Would I like to take a turn around the old workings and have a glimmer? We passed an hour or two wandering round and up and down these subterranean galleries, and spent a quarter of an hour near the bottom of the shaft, where, grey and faint, the light of the sun and of the upper world was discerned. On this promenade I saw numbers of rats. They seemed rather nice little beasts, quite white, with dark eyes which I was assured in the daylight were a bright pink. Three years afterwards a British officer on duty in the district wrote to me that he had heard my statement at a lecture about the white rats and their pink eyes, and thought it was the limit of mendacity. He had taken the trouble to visit the mine and see for himself, and he proceeded to apologize for having doubted my truthfulness.

ON the 15th Mr. Howard announced that the hue and cry seemed to be dying away. No trace of the fugitive had been discovered throughout the mining district. The talk among the Boer officials was now that I must be hiding at the house of some British sympathizer in Pretoria. They did not believe that it was possible I could have got out of the town. In these circumstances he thought that I might come up and have a walk on the veldt that night, and that if all was quiet the next morning I might shift my quarters to the back room of the office. On the one hand he seemed reassured, and on the other increasingly excited by the adventure. Accordingly, I had a fine stroll in the glorious fresh air and moonlight, and thereafter, anticipating slightly our programme, I took up my quarters behind packing-cases in the inner room of the office. Here I remained for three more days, walking each night on the endless plain with Mr. Howard or his assistant.

On the 16th, the fourth day of escape, Mr. Howard informed me he had made a plan to get me out of the country. The mine was connected with the railway by a branch line. In the neighbourhood of the mine there lived a Dutchman, Burgener by name, who was sending a consignment of wool to Delagoa Bay on the 19th. This gentleman was well disposed to the British. He had been approached by Mr. Howard, had been made a party to our secret, and was willing to assist. Mr. Burgener's wool was packed in great bales and would fill two or three large trucks. These trucks were to be loaded at the mine's siding. The bales could be so packed as to leave a small place in the centre of the truck in which I could be concealed. A tarpaulin would be fastened over each truck after it had been loaded, and it was very unlikely indeed that, if the fastenings were found intact, it would be removed at the frontier. Did I agree to take this chance?

I was more worried about this than almost anything that had happened to me so far in my adventure. When by extraordinary chance one has gained some great advantage or prize and actually had it in one's possession and had been enjoying it for several days, the idea of losing it becomes almost insupportable. I had really come to count upon freedom as a certainty, and the idea of having to put myself in a position in which I should be perfectly helpless, without a move of any kind, absolutely at the caprice of a searching party at the frontier, was profoundly harassing. Rather than face this ordeal I would much have preferred to start off on the veldt with a pony and a guide, and far from the haunts of man to make my way march by march beyond the wide territories of the Boer Republic. However, in the end I accepted the proposal of my generous rescuer, and arrangements were made accordingly.

The afternoon of the 18th dragged slowly away. I remember that I spent the greater part of it reading Stevenson's "Kidnapped." Those thrilling pages which describe the escape of David Balfour and Alan Breck in the glens awakened sensations with which I was only too familiar. To be a fugitive, to be a hunted man, to be "wanted," is a mental experience by itself. The risks of the battlefield, the hazards of the bullet or the shell, are one thing. Having the police after you is another. The need for concealment and deception breeds an actual sense of guilt very undermining to morale. Feeling that at any moment the officers of the law may present themselves, or any stranger may ask the questions, "Who are you?" "Where do you come from?" "Where are you going?"—to which questions no satisfactory answer could be given—gnawed the structure of self-confidence. I dreaded in every fibre the ordeal which



After an interval Mr. Howard's pale, sombre face appeared, suffused by a broad grin.

awaited me at Komati Poort, and which I must impotently and passively endure if I was to make good my escape from the enemy.

In this mood I was startled by the sound of rifle-shots close at hand, one after another at irregular intervals. A dozen sinister hypotheses flashed through my mind. The Boers had come! Howard and his handful of Englishmen were in open rebellion in the heart of the enemy's country! I had been strictly enjoined upon no account to leave my hiding-place behind the packing-cases, in any circumstances whatever, and I accordingly remained there in great anxiety. Presently it became clear that the worst had not happened. The sounds of voices and presently of laughter came from the office. Evidently a conversation amicable, sociable in its character was in progress. I resumed my companionship with Alan Breck. At last the voices died away, and then after an interval my door was opened and Mr. Howard's pale, sombre face appeared, suffused by a broad grin. He re-locked the door behind him and walked delicately towards me, evidently in great glee.

"The Field Cornet has been here," he said. "No, he was not looking for you. He says they caught you at Waterval Boven yesterday. But I didn't want him messing about, so I challenged him to a rifle match at bottles. He won two pounds off me and has gone away delighted.

"It is all fixed up for to-night," he added.

"What do I do?" I asked.

"Nothing. You simply follow me when I come for you."

AT two o'clock on the morning of the 19th I awaited, fully dressed, the signal. The door opened. My host appeared. He beckoned. Not a word was spoken on either side. He led the way through the front office to the siding where three large bogie trucks stood. Three figures, evidently Dewsnap and the miners, were strolling about in different directions in the moonlight. A gang of Kaffirs were busy lifting an enormous bale into the rearmost truck. Howard strolled along to the first truck and walked across the line past the end of it. As he did so he pointed with his right hand. I nipped on to the buffers and saw before me a hole between the wool bales and the end of the truck just wide enough to squeeze into. From this there led a narrow tunnel formed of wool bales into the centre of the truck. Here was a space wide enough to lie in, high enough to sit up in. In this I took up my abode.

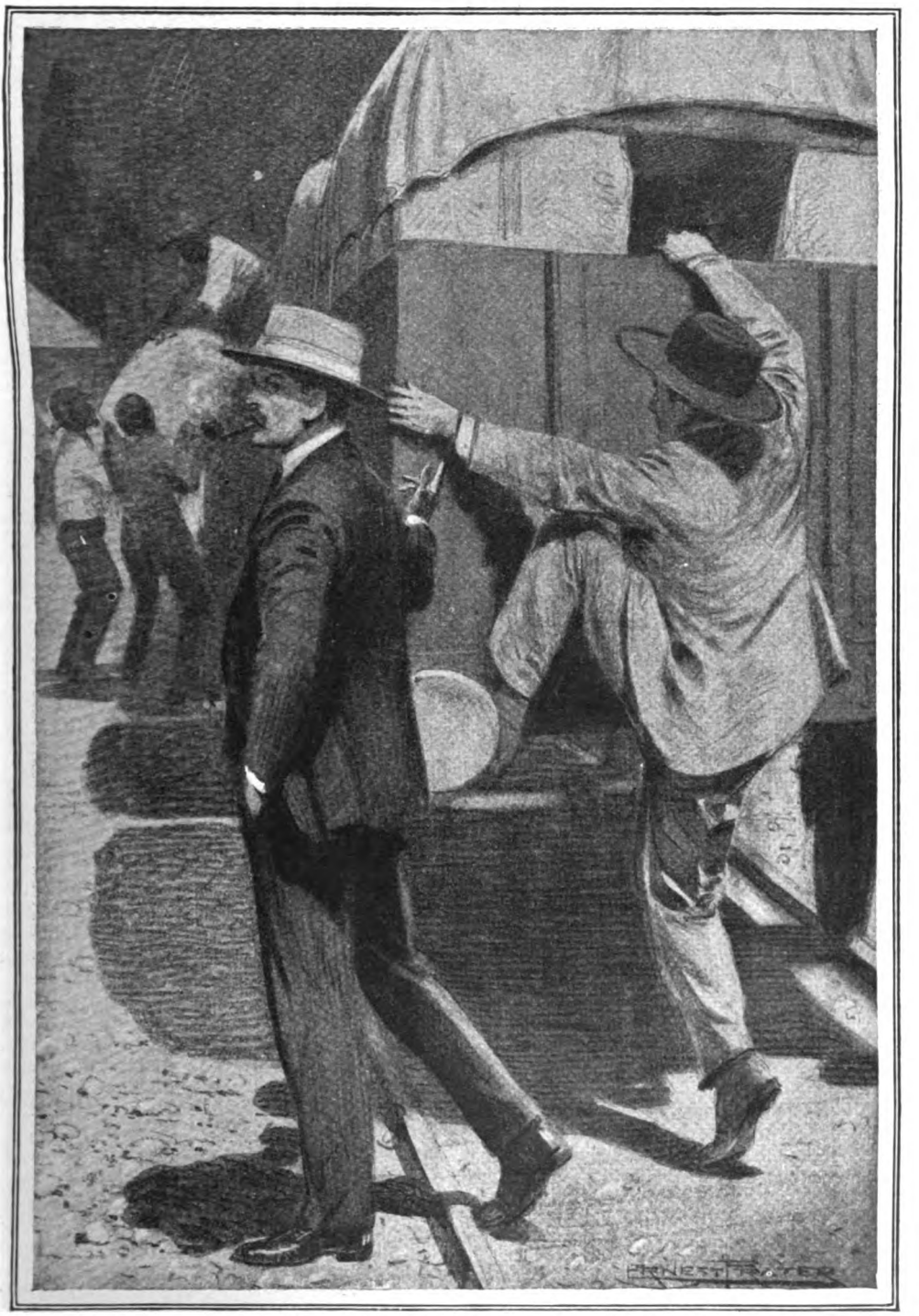
Three or four hours later, when gleams of daylight had reached me through the interstices of my shelter and through chinks in the boards of the flooring of the truck, the noise of an approaching engine was heard. Then came the bumping and banging of coupling up. And again, after a further pause, we started rumbling off on our journey into the unknown.

I now took stock of my new abode and of the resources in munitions and supplies with which it was furnished. First there was a revolver. This was a moral support, though it was not easy to see in what way it could helpfully be applied to any problem I was likely to have to solve. Secondly, there were two roast chickens, some slices of meat, a loaf of bread, a melon, and three bottles of cold tea. The journey to the sea was not expected to take more than sixteen hours, but no one could tell what delay might occur to ordinary commercial traffic in time of war.

There was plenty of light now in the recess in which I was confined. There were many crevices in the boards composing the sides and floor of the truck, and through these the light found its way between the wool bales. Working along the tunnel to the end of the truck, I found a chink which must have been nearly an eighth of an inch in width, and through which it was possible to gain a partial view of the outer world. To check the progress of the journey I had learned by heart beforehand the names of all the stations on the route. I can remember many of them to-day: Witbank, Middelburg, Bergendal, Belfast, Dalmanutha, Machadodorp, Waterval Boven, Waterval Onder, Elands, Nooidgedacht, and so on to Komati Poort. We had by now reached the first of these. At this point the branch line from the mine joined the railway. Here, after two or three hours' delay and shunting, we were evidently coupled up to a regular train, and soon started off at a superior and very satisfactory pace. All day long we travelled eastward through the Transvaal, and when darkness fell we were laid up for the night at a station which, according to my reckoning, was Waterval Boven. We had accomplished nearly half of our journey. But how long should we wait on this siding? It might be for days; it would certainly be until the next morning. During all the dragging hours of the day I had lain on the floor of the truck occupying my mind as best I could, painting bright pictures of the pleasures of freedom, of the excitement of rejoining the Army, of the triumph of a successful escape—but haunted also perpetually by anxieties about the search at the frontier, an ordeal inevitable and constantly approaching. Now another apprehension laid hold upon me. I wanted to go to sleep. Indeed, I did not think I could possibly keep awake. But if I slept I might snore! And if I snored while the train was at rest in the silent siding I might be heard. And if I were heard! I decided in principle that it was only prudent to abstain from sleep, and shortly afterwards fell into a blissful slumber from which I was awakened the next morning by the banging and jerking of the train as the engine was again coupled to it.

Between Waterval Boven and Waterval Onder there is a very steep descent which the locomotive accomplishes by means of a rack and pinion. We ground our way down this at three or four miles an hour, and this feature made my reckoning certain that the next station was, in fact, Waterval Onder. All this day, too, we rattled through the enemy's country, and late in the afternoon we reached the dreaded Komati Poort. Peeping through my chink, I could see this was a considerable place, with numerous tracks of rails and several trains standing on them. Numbers of people were moving about. There were many voices and much shouting and whistling. After a preliminary inspection of the scene I retreated, as the train pulled up, into the very centre of my fastness, and covering myself up with a piece of sacking lay flat on the floor of the truck and awaited developments with a beating heart.

Three or four hours passed, and I did



I nipped on to the buffers and saw before me a hole between the wool bales and the end of the truck just wide enough to squeeze into.

not know whether we had been searched or not. Several times people had passed up and down the train talking in Dutch. But the tarpaulins had not been removed, and no special examination seemed to have been made of the truck. Meanwhile darkness had come on, and I had to resign myself to an indefinite continuance of my uncertainties. It was tantalizing to be held so long in jeopardy after all these hundreds of miles had been accomplished, and I was now within a few hundred yards of the frontier. Again I wondered about the dangers of snoring. But in the end I slept without mishap.

We were still stationary when I awoke. Perhaps they were searching the train so thoroughly that there was consequently a great delay! Alternatively, perhaps we were forgotten on the siding and would be left there for days or weeks. I was greatly tempted to peer out, but I resisted. At last, at eleven o'clock, we were coupled up, and almost immediately started. If I had been right in thinking that the station in which we had passed the night was Komati Poort, I was already in Portuguese territory. But perhaps I had made a mistake. Perhaps I had miscounted. Perhaps there was still another station before the frontier. Perhaps the search still impended. But all these doubts were dispelled when the train arrived at the next station. I peered through my chink and saw the uniform caps of the Portuguese officials on the platform and the name Resana Garcia painted on a board. I restrained all expression of my joy until we moved on again. Then, as we rumbled and banged along, I pushed my head out of the tarpaulin and sang and shouted and crowed at the top of my voice. Indeed, I was so carried away by thankfulness and delight that I fired my revolver two or three times in the air as a *feu de joie*. None of these follies led to any evil results.

IT was late in the afternoon when we reached Lourenço Marques. My train ran into a goods yard, and a crowd of Kaffirs advanced to unload it. I thought the moment had now come for me to quit my hiding-place, in which I had passed nearly three anxious and uncomfortable days. I had already thrown out every vestige of food and had removed all traces of my occupation. I now slipped out at the end of the truck between the couplings, and mingling unnoticed with the Kaffirs and loafers in the yard—which my slovenly and unkempt appearance well fitted me to do—I strolled my way towards the gates and found myself in the streets of Lourenço Marques.

Burgener was waiting outside the gates. We exchanged glances. He turned and walked off into the town, and I followed twenty yards behind. We walked through several streets and turned a number of corners. Presently he stopped and stood for a moment gazing up at the roof of the opposite house. I looked in the same direction, and there—blest vision!—I saw floating the gay colours of the Union Jack. It was the British Consulate.

The secretary of the British Consul evidently did not expect my arrival.

"Be off," he said. "The Consul cannot see you to-day. Come to his office at nine to-morrow, if you want anything."

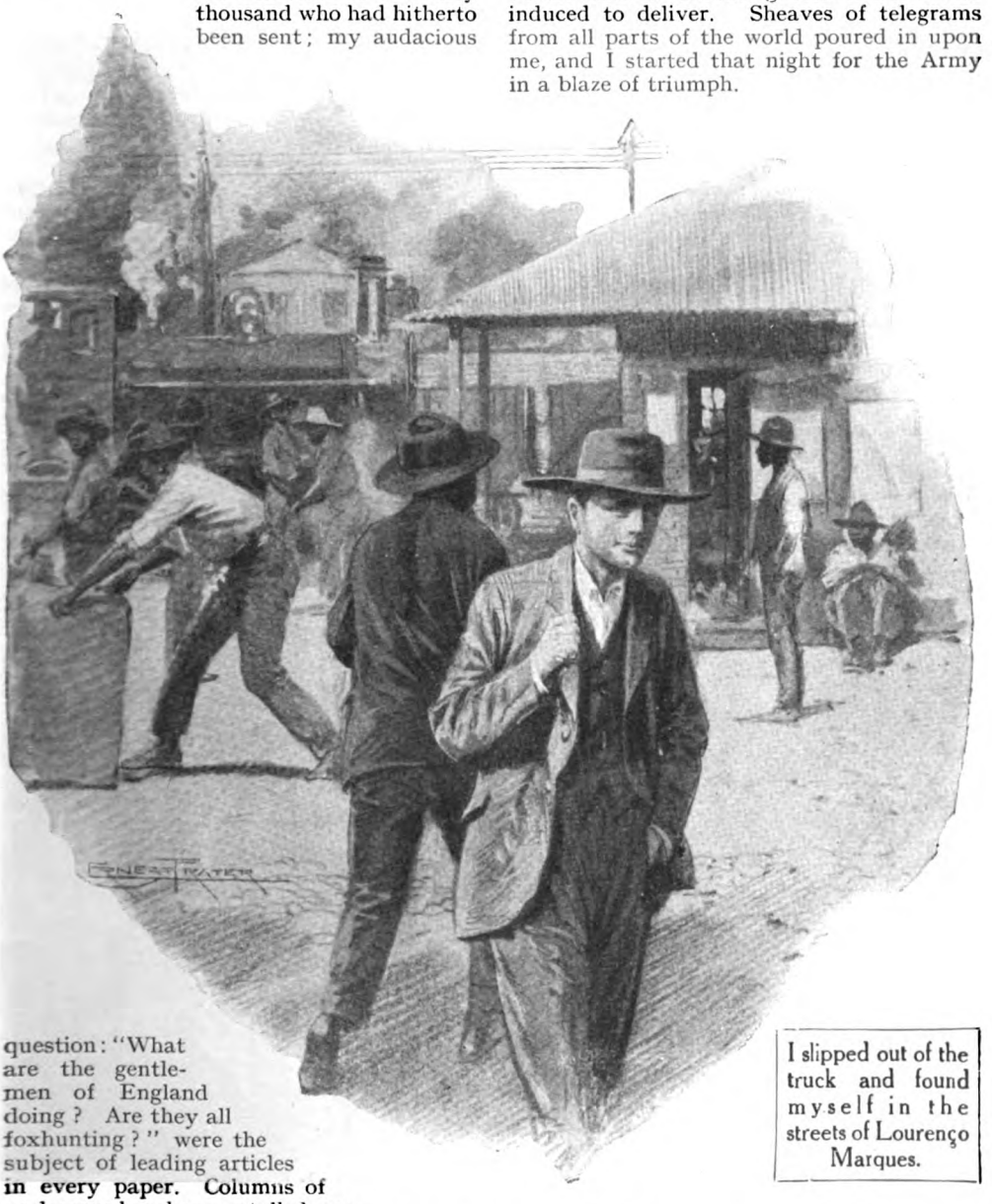
At this I became so angry, and repeated so loudly that I insisted on seeing the Consul personally at once, that that gentleman himself looked out of the window and finally came down to the door and asked me my name. From that moment every resource of hospitality and welcome was at my disposal. A hot bath, clean clothing, an excellent dinner, means of telegraphing—all I could want.

I devoured the file of newspapers which was placed before me. Great events had taken place since I had climbed the wall of the States Model Schools. The Black Week of the Boer War had descended on the British Army. General Gatacre at Stormberg, Lord Methuen at Magersfontein, and Sir Redvers Buller at Colenso had all suffered staggering defeats, and casualties on a scale unknown to England since the Crimean War. All this made me eager to rejoin the Army, and the Consul himself was no less anxious to get me out of Lourenço Marques, which was full of Boers and Boer sympathizers. Happily the weekly steamer was leaving for Durban that very evening; in fact, it might almost be said it ran in connection with my train. On this steamer I decided to embark.

The news of my arrival had spread like wildfire through the town, and while we were at dinner the Consul was at first disturbed to see a group of strange figures in the garden. These, however, turned out to be Englishmen fully armed who had hurried up to the Consulate determined to resist any attempt at my recapture. Under the escort of these patriotic gentlemen I marched safely through the streets to the quay, and at about ten o'clock was on salt water in the steamship *Induna*.

SUCH is my tale. Youth seeks adventure. Journalism requires advertisement. Certainly I had found both. At one bound I became for the time quite famous. While the British nation was smarting under a series of military defeats such as are so often

necessary to evoke the exercise of its strength, the news of my escape from the Boers was received with enormous and no doubt disproportionate satisfaction. My messages calling for a quarter of a million men instead of the fifty thousand who had hitherto been sent; my audacious question: "What are the gentlemen of England doing? Are they all foxhunting?" were the subject of leading articles in every paper. Columns of undeserved eulogy extolled my enterprise, daring, and resource. I reached Durban to find myself a popular hero. I was received as if I had won a great victory. The harbour was decorated with flags. Bands and crowds thronged the quays. The admiral, the general, the mayor pressed on board to grasp my hand. I was nearly torn to pieces by enthusiastic kindness. Whirled along on the shoulders of the crowd, I was carried to the steps of the Town Hall, where nothing would content them but a speech, which after a becoming reluctance I was induced to deliver. Sheaves of telegrams from all parts of the world poured in upon me, and I started that night for the Army in a blaze of triumph.



I slipped out of the truck and found myself in the streets of Lourenço Marques.

Here, too, I was received with the greatest goodwill. I took up my quarters in the very platelayer's hut within one hundred yards of which I had a little more than a month before been taken prisoner, and there with the rude plenty of the Natal campaign

celebrated by a dinner to many friends my good fortune and Christmas Eve.

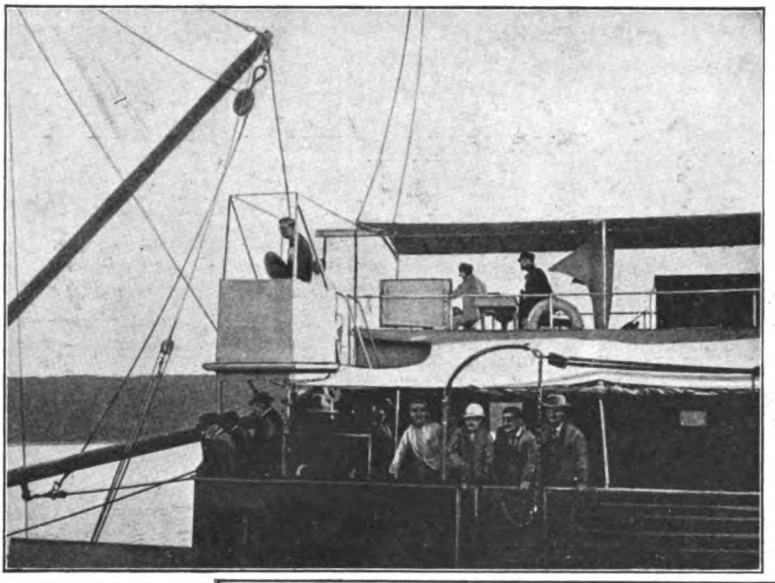
After Sir Redvers Buller, the Commander-in-Chief, had examined me at length upon the conditions prevailing in the Transvaal, and after I had given him whatever information I had been able to collect from the somewhat scanty viewpoint of my chink between the boards of the railway truck, he said to me :—

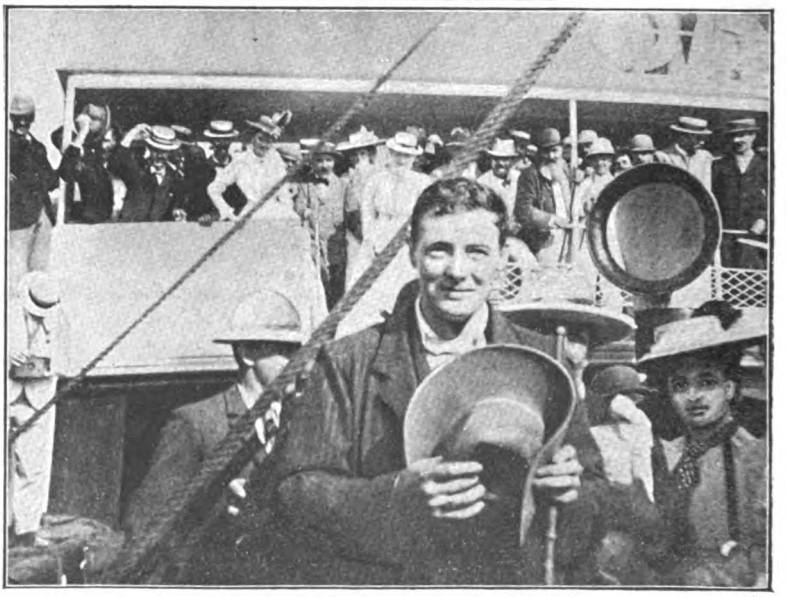
"You have done very well. Is there anything we can do for you ?"

I replied at once that I should like a commission in one of the irregular corps which were being improvised on all sides. The General, whom, of course, I had known off and on during the four years I had served in the Army, appeared somewhat disconcerted at this, and after a considerable pause inquired :—

"What about poor old Borthwick ?"

meaning thereby Sir Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, proprietor of the *Morning Post* newspaper. I replied that I was under a definite contract with him as war correspondent and could not possibly relinquish this engagement. The situation therefore raised considerable issues. In the various little wars of the previous few years it had been customary for military officers on leave to act as war correspondents, and even for officers actually serving to undertake this double duty. This had been considered to be a great abuse, and no doubt it was open to many objections.





From] Mr. Winston Churchill's arrival at Durban. [Photos.

No one had been more criticized in this connection than myself. I had served both on the Indian frontier and up the Nile as a soldier, and had also contributed openly and continually to the newspapers. After the Nile Expedition the War

From a] Addressing the enthusiastic crowds at Durban. *[Photo.*

Office had definitely and finally decided that no soldier could be a correspondent and no correspondent could be a soldier. Here then was the new rule in all its inviolate sanctity, and to make an exception to it on my account above all others was a very hard proposition. Sir Redvers Buller, long Adjutant-General at the War Office, a man of the world, a man of affairs, a representative of the strictest military school, found it very awkward. He took two or three turns round the room, eyeing me in a droll manner. Then at last he said :—

"All right. You can have a commission in Bungo's* regiment. You will have to do as much as you can for both jobs. But," he added, "you will get no pay for ours."

To this irregular arrangement I made haste to agree.

* Colonel Byng, now Lord Byng of Vimy.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 126.

(The Second of the Series.)

SKIS and toboggans, ice and snow,
To Switzerland our athletes go.

1. 'Tis true, no king of Switzerland was this,
   And yet the sight he saw was rather Swiss.
2. Devil or boy—who knows which it may be?
   A veritable fiend of mischief he.
3. He lacks whereon to sleep who rose to fame
   By safe deliverance from fiery flame.
4. "Rub lightly" was unheard of in those days;
   "Strike hard and often," and perchance 'twould blaze.
5. 'Tis once upon a time; in poets' rhyme
   The word was common once upon a time.
6. Anent the lady—here behold your cue;
   But be not this, for that will never do.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 126 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on January* 11*th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 125.

HERE may an evening well be spent
At time of joy and merriment.

1. Our ills with this the doctor heals.
2. This place the hidden foe conceals.
3. African river should be black.
4. A tail we get, a tail we lack.
5. Sixteen or twelve go to a pound.
6. In prophet's name a home is found.
7. A phrase; one letter changed, unwise.
8. Of coffee think, and Arab skies.
9. Six letters, though they sound like two,
   Will surely be too much for you.

PAX.

1. P	hysi	C
2. A	mbus	H
3. N	ige	R
4. T	a	I
5. O	unce	S
6. M	ahome	T
7. I	dio	M
8. M	och	A
9. E	xces	S

NOTES.—Light 4. Tail. 5. Troy or Avoirdupois.

WELL LOST ?

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

THE sailor's voice roused him at its second repetition, as the boat lifted to the pitch-black sky on the flank of a pitch-black wave.

"You'd better come and look after that lady o' yourn!"

It was many years since Mr. Drahan had been spoken to in so peremptory a voice—not, in fact, since Mr. Drahan had started in business for himself at the age of eighteen. And with the passage of time his interlocutors had grown ever more deferential; until Antony Drahan had almost forgotten what it was like not to be addressed as a multi-millionaire.

He checked himself from resentment, savoured an ironic sense of humour. This fellow didn't know who he was!—had no idea that he was Mr. Antony Drahan of the Transatlantic Trust! He left himself the joke—what was the good of revealing himself, anyway? His mind cogitated the little problem, came to its decision, in a flash—and from the fellow's manner his consciousness opened suddenly to the content of his words.

He stumbled awkwardly over the thwarts to where the sailor sat, tiller in one hand, mainsheet in the other. At the steersman's feet, in the well of the boat, a woman lay stretched and motionless. Drahan bent over her. Her shoulders were bare in the thin evening-gown that clung to her like a sopped rag, her long wet hair wrapped about it. In the dim, uncertain light of the careering mast-head lamp, she looked a drowned corpse, beyond help. He touched her.

"Ain't dead, is she?" queried the sailor.

"No."

He slithered down beside her, drew her to him, held her close in his arms, her death-like head heavy on his shoulder, striving to communicate to her a little of his own scant bodily warmth.

"Not your wife, I suppose?" the old sailor threw at him as the boat slid swiftly down into a black hollow where the wind was suddenly stilled.

"Yes," he replied, curtly.

They relapsed into silence. The sailor, crouching at the tiller as, rather by feel than by sight, he nursed the boat through the foaming, overtopping perils that surged momentarily out of the blackness, distracted his concentrated attention by no unnecessary words. Antony Drahan sat cramped and still, clutching that cold body tightly to him. Presently he felt a flutter of life in it. She sighed, passed almost insensibly out of coma into the drugged sleep of utter exhaustion. Drahan spoke, out of a vacancy of thought.

"Where are you making for?"

"Gawd knows! We're just running. Ain't nothing else to be done in this sea."

"No other lights?"

"No." The rugged old face, just seen in the faint illumination of the circling mast-head lamp, spoke with a gruff economy of energy. "Guess we're the only ones left."

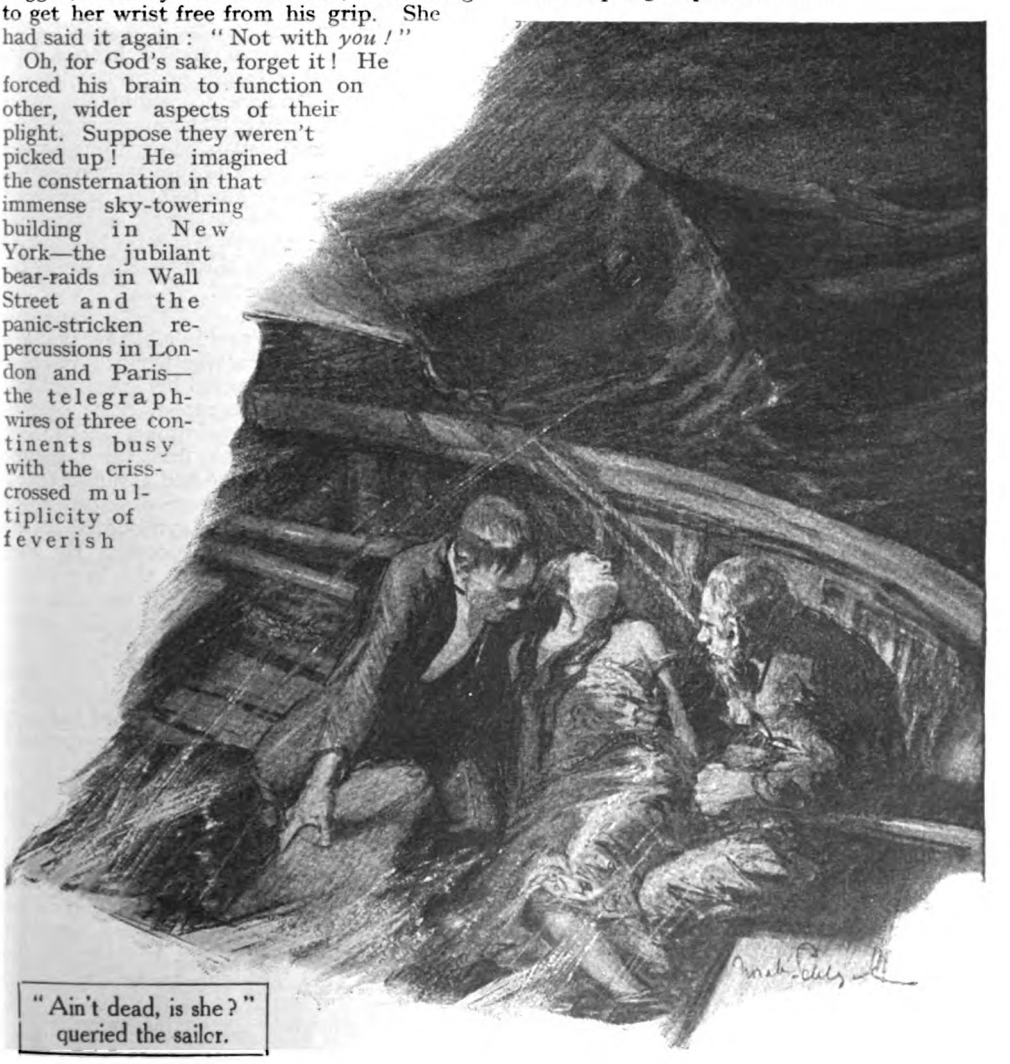
The curt, callous-sounding statement pierced the numbness of his spirit with a little shock of horror. Good God! There must have been at least eight hundred people on the *Melanesian*. And now they two, *of all people*, were saved! He relinquished comprehension before the clumsy irony manifest in the scheme of things.

His brain began to work again, recapitulated the disaster, pieced the story together for himself. He felt again that sudden dull thud which jarred every fitting in the ship. He heard again that wild ringing of bells, the startling manifold shriek of shrill whistles, the trampling rush of crowding feet outside their cabin-de-luxe on the boat-deck. He recalled how he and Adela had stopped in their coldly bitter interchange of unforgivable words, the look of her strange

Copyright, 1923, by F. Britten Austin.

eyes that softened not in the sudden whiteness of her face. He had seized her wrist, dragged her towards the door, and she had resisted, coldly, stubbornly, head-high, the damned aristocrat still—the implacability of her scornful hatred of him had insulted him in this moment of life or death—her words rang in him still, never to be forgotten —"Not with *you!*" He had triumphed, by brute force, dragged her out to the deck among the swarm of people, now high-voiced in an unnerving clamour, now hushed in a dreadful silence. He remembered the breathlessly ejaculated answer of the hurrying officer as they jostled in the throng— "Derelict!—Ripped the bottom out of her!" The deck was already at an angle where they slid. And somehow or other he had got her into that boat, despite her dogged, foot-by-foot resistance, wrenching to get her wrist free from his grip. She had said it again: "Not with *you!*"

Oh, for God's sake, forget it! He forced his brain to function on other, wider aspects of their plight. Suppose they weren't picked up! He imagined the consternation in that immense sky-towering building in New York—the jubilant bear-raids in Wall Street and the panic-stricken repercussions in London and Paris—the telegraph-wires of three continents busy with the criss-crossed multiplicity of feverish readjustments that must ensue. Who would carry on in his place? Hardwick? He had never dared to get off the wireless with Hardwick yet. He was all right as second-in-command, but he wasn't big enough for supreme control. Hardwick was all right on oil, but he was no good when it came to steel—and he was a perfect fool at shipping. And Hennessey would be out for blood, too—wrecking them first (he could imagine Hennessey's exultant devastating flood of selling-orders) and picking up the pieces afterwards. Could Hardwick stand up against Hennessey? He lost himself in distant visions of brain-against-brain contests fought out by stampeded sheep-like markets, forgot the boat that slithered foam-squattering under her counter down the flank of one black wave to toss up high upon the next.



"Ain't dead, is she?" queried the sailor.

His mind reverted once more to that last hour on the ship, reconstructed that drama whose full implications had been blurred by the thought-stopping rush of events. He was in the sitting-room of his suite-de-luxe—a batch of radiograms had been handed to him as he got up from dinner. Janson, the perfect secretary, unobtrusively efficient, had slit them open as was his wont, passed him those imperative of his personal attention, risen in readiness to accompany him for the hour or two of swiftly-achieved work that would send the messenger-boys scampering to and from the wireless office. Adela—she had never looked more beautiful, her fine eyes calm upon him—was going to dance; she had promised the Mainwarings. That was antecedent; he was in the spacious sitting-room of his suite-de-luxe, the ship heaving and subsiding so slowly and evenly that its motion had become almost imperceptible. Sitting back in his chair, cigar in mouth, his eyes fixed on the Adams stucco-work of the ceiling, he had already dictated half-a-dozen summary decisions.

And then Janson had said, in his quiet, clear voice—curious how he had no premonition that he was unlocking disaster!—"There's that matter of Eberstein in Hamburg, sir——?"

Confound it, so there was. He had postponed the answer to Eberstein for consideration. What had he done with that radiogram? He remembered—he had crumpled it into the jacket-pocket of the lounge-suit he had been wearing that afternoon. He'd better have another look at it; it was an artfully-phrased question. The jacket was in his cabin, where he had changed for dinner. "All right, Janson, get on typing those others—I'll fetch it," he had said. And he also had gone blindly on the path of fate.

The jacket was not in his cabin—where the devil?—he remembered—he had gone through into Adela's cabin, stripped it off while he spoke to her. It ought to be there now—her maid was still eating with the second-class, had not cleared up yet. He went through the communicating door. Yes, there was the jacket. Before he reached it, the ship lurched and rolled on an unusually heavy wave. Adela's jewel-case—how careless to leave it out! But the suite was locked, of course—went slithering across the dressing-table. He was too late to save it. It crashed upon the floor, burst open in an eruption of glittering stones. He went down on hands and knees to pick them up. Among them was a small folded piece of paper. He opened it mechanically. It was a cablegram: "*Drahan (A) Melanesian Honolulu Thinking of you keep a stiff lip love George.*"

He had stared at it, sitting upon the floor for a full minute while credibility asserted itself. "*George?*" George Addiscombe! His mind leaped to the identification. *George Addiscombe!*—then—then—he looked at the damning words, felt suddenly sick and ill. But how had that cablegram come without his seeing it? His eye fell on the bracketed "A" after his name—a pre-arranged code, then?—and Janson—she must have bribed Janson. *Bribed Janson!* For a moment the bottom fell out of the universe.

He managed somehow to get up, to steady himself to the arm-chair, where he thudded down, gasping, for an attempt at clear thought. Adela!—Adela and George Addiscombe! She—she wasn't the cold statue, then, that—that these three years long he had accepted her to be. The fellow had dared to cable to her—secretly. "*Love—George.*" The worthless, dandified squanderer! He had dared to tell her to keep a stiff lip, in implied difficult endurance of—of him, Antony Drahan, to whom she owed everything! A savage, bitter anger surged up in him. They'd play with him, would they?—make a mock of him!—corrupt his servants!—deceive *him!*—him who with a word could make or break a thousand George Addiscombes!—him who had forced his triumphant path through the world by sheer brutal will-power!

AND Adela!—he couldn't believe it of her—he didn't know whether he loved her, but he had respected her, regarded her almost with awe—the rarest, most dearly-bought of all his acquisitions. She had seemed of a stuff too fine for common domestic intercourse—he had assumed that; let her live her own remote dignified inner life, content so that she symbolized to all men the regality of his success. He had never flattered himself that she loved him—she had never pretended to—but she owed it to him to play fair with him, to be grateful to him—yes, by God! to be grateful to him. Everything that money could buy had been hers—he had grudged nothing, gloried in a reckless outpouring at her feet—houses, jewels, furs, cars—her damned family would have starved had it not been for him. Even this trip round the world, taking him from his job, was the costly gratification of a whim of hers.

He had risen unsteadily to his feet. Well, this was the end! He'd pluck that mask off, anyway, once and for all—there'd be no more artistically-acted frigid lies between her and him—all his life he had insisted on a straight deal, straight as he had dealt himself—been merciless to the clever ones.

He had gone into the sitting-room.

"Janson, ask Mrs. Drahan to be good enough to come to me here."

"Yes, sir." Janson had gone, unsuspectingly.

He had waited, a cold cigar between his teeth, staring at the graph-chart (freights and expenses) of one of his shipping-lines upon the wall, realizing after a minute or two that it had no meaning for him.

And then she had appeared, superb, queenly in her evening-gown, Janson deferential behind her.

"You want me, Antony?" He could hear her calmly self-confident voice now.

He had found it difficult to speak, had only been able to look straight into those large, innocently-questioning eyes—to hand her that cablegram.

She had taken it, glanced at it, crushed it in her hand, turned and looked at him. There had been a silence.

He broke it, in a voice that sounded not his own.

"Janson, you're sacked! From this moment!"

"Sir?" He remembered how Janson's face had suddenly blanched. (And half an hour later the man was dead!—ironic.)

She had turned to him in expostulating protest.

"Antony!"

"I don't permit my servants to be bribed—even by my wife!" His tone had cut like a whip-lash.

She had flushed up in sudden indignation.

"I did not bribe Mr. Janson!"

He had turned to the trembling secretary.

"Did you suppress that cablegram?"

"Yes, sir—but—but I did it because—because there's nothing in the world I wouldn't do for Mrs. Drahan!"

"That will do. Get out of here—and you get off at Singapore."

Janson had gone, and they stood confronting one another in silence.

"Well?" she had said.

"You don't deny it, then?" He had been near spluttering, had had to keep a tight hand on himself.

She had shrugged her bare shoulders, superbly disdainful of answer.

"You've got nothing to say for yourself?"

"It may as well come now—you can put me off also at Singapore." She had been insultingly cool, self-controlled.

"Not before I've told you what I think of you!" he had burst out, his voice thick in his throat. And he had told her—had recapitulated all he had done for her, her family saved from ruin, the things he had lavished on her, the Golconda of precious things she had accepted from him—with what return?—the very money this fantastic trip was losing him.

She had held up a deprecating, weary hand.

"I know. You bought and paid for me—for three years you have implied it at every moment. There is no need to tell me."

"I made a bad bargain." He was master of himself again, his tone coldly bitter.

She had looked at him from her dignity, her eyes sombre in their steadiness.

"Yes. Perhaps."

The impudence of it! He had felt himself go white.

"You realize what you've thrown away, don't you?"

She had nodded, the slightest undulation of her superb head.

"Yes. Five million dollars last year, wasn't it? I ought to know. For three years I have heard nothing else—I have heard money, money, money, nothing but money, until——" she spoke with a measured precision that sent every word at him to full effect—"until my soul has ached—ached to escape from it——"

"To George Addiscombe?" He had smiled over tight teeth, in icy sarcasm.

She had shrugged her shoulders.

"At least, life to him is more than a sordid market-place."

It was the final outrage. He had gripped himself, framing already the phrase that should annihilate, from his side also, the last possibility of reconciliation—and then had come the shock, the sudden pandemonium of the shrieking whistles, the nightmare at the boats, that tense rebellious struggle where she tried to wrench away her wrist—"Not with *you!*"

HE shivered in the boat that went, spray-drenched, wallowing, dizzily-up, sickeningly-down, in the racing seas that whelmed with the black night. He felt faint and hungry—if only he could sleep—as *she* was sleeping! But he could not—that infernal double drama, one only ceasing to give place to the other, his private disaster to those screaming hundreds, reiterated itself in him with a vividness that was maddening, over and over again. He remembered suddenly that there were some cigarettes in his case. They might, with luck, be dry. The case was in his dinner-jacket, about the woman slumbering shiveringly close against him. He felt for it, with precaution.

She stirred, murmured out of a dream: "George—George!"

He set his teeth, opened the cigarette-case, tossed one, with his spirit-lighter, to the gruffly grateful steersman, lit his own, puffed staring at the yellow mast-light gyrating against the black sky. And then—imperceptibly—he was in his New

York office, feverishly, fiercely exultant as he took measure after measure to deal with Hennessey—he was—he was in oblivion—he was crumpled in the mindless dreamless sleep that is Nature's mercy.

JUST within that rim of shade where the coconut-palms ceased upon the dazzling white beach, a powerfully-built man, clad only in the remnants of tattered and sea-stained black trousers, sat watching a spitted fish broil over a crackling fire of husks. By the side of him lay the primitive net with which he had caught it, a torn-open shirt (his name yet visible on the collar-band) roughly fastened to two short pieces of driftwood. Just beyond, a spring of clear water went in a rivulet down to the scarcely-ruffled placidity of the lagoon. Half a mile out, in long, semicircular simultaneity of appearance, the spray shot up, white and glittering, from the enclosing reef ; its deep-toned boom a sound so continuous as to lapse out of notice. Nearer at hand, some hundreds of yards along the beach, the skeletal wreckage of a boat lay half-submerged, half upon the sand, lapped by tiny waves that failed to break.

The fish was cooked. The man removed it to a palm-leaf, threw a handful of husks upon the fire to keep it in existence, called :

" Adela ! "

A woman appeared from among the close-set trunks of the palm-grove, her arms full with dried fronds and fibrous husks. For her only garment, a length of torn, stained silk—in which Captain Molyneux of the Rue Royale would have failed to recognize one of his most exquisite creations—was wrapped around her. Her brown hair cascaded loose about her shoulders. Her skin was reddened by the sun, white only on the undersides of her arms. Yet she was beautiful—beautiful as a nymph emerging from a sacred grove. The adult dignity of civilized attire had fallen from her, she was freshly girlish in this reversion to the primitive. She deposited her load, sat down.

Antony Drahan divided the fish into two equal portions with an exiguous gold pocket-knife, reached for a jaggedly-burst-open canister of ship's biscuits close at hand.

" These biscuits won't last for more than a few days longer. We must try and find some bread-fruit. It ought to grow on this island. Looks like a melon. I remember reading about it once. You cook it between hot stones." He spoke, not easily conversational, but through a cold constraint, his sentences harshly detached from one another, avoiding a direct glance at her.

She parted the loose hair from her brows to look meditatively out to sea.

" Yes." Her tone also was devoid of intimacy. " I was thinking about that this morning. I found a tree that looked like it. I meant to ask you. I was thinking of a lot of things, in case——" She broke off. " Antony, do you think there's really any chance of being picked up ? Are we near the usual track of ships ? "

He shrugged his shoulders.

" I don't know. Nothing has passed these three days. We were about sixty hours in that boat, running before the wind."

She made no further remark and they ate in silence. His mind reverted to a many-times worried-over calculation—what were they doing ?—seven or eight knots ?—or perhaps more ?—or less ?—he had no idea. It had blown half a gale, but they had driven saggingly in that sea—say, seven—sixty hours—four hundred miles——

From these calculations, unsatisfying in their lack of stable basis, he found himself looking at a picture of themselves in the boat—the old, grey-whiskered sailor steering, hour after hour at his post with only those brief intermissions in the broiling heat of the two ensuing days when he had slept and the passenger had, after careful instruction, been entrusted with nursing the boat through the racing ever-overtaking surges—Adela white and silent, her face expressionless as she stared at the threatening sea, sitting against a thwart—himself, when they could abstain no longer for very faintness, doling out the water, the dry biscuit that was their ration. They had been spared the worst of sufferings. The boat had been provisioned upon the davits, contained a keg of water, two canisters of biscuits (of which this upon the beach was the second). He remembered his clumsy efforts to open the tin with the hatchet (for cutting the falls ?) stowed away in the locker. . . . And then that dawn, pale above the dark water, with the palm-trees, seen one moment, lost the next, tiny against the sky. They had been driving almost straight towards them, had scarcely needed to alter their course. . . .

He found himself looking at the terror of the reef as they approached it, the great white walls shooting up in ceaseless boom and crash, the hiss of their descent hardly completed before the next breaker rolled in. . . . And then that sudden relief in their anxious tension as they coasted round looking for an entrance—the narrow gap of dark swirling water between the leaping sheets of surf—their rush towards it, borne formidably forward on the breast of a great lifting roller—the half-heard shout of the old sailor as he lost steerage-power in its velocity—the thunderous stunning deluge that crashed down upon them, beating them

under—that desperate swim, dragging a leaden burden, through an agony of imagined sharks, to the gleaming beach that seemed almost to recede—his fall, face forward, gasping, on the hot sand where he had lain, impotent, for long minutes before he could sit up and look for the old sailor—in vain.

He saw himself dragging Adela to the shade of the palm-trees, saw her at long last revive, her eyes open at him in a long strange stare, her lips move for her first words.

"You've—saved me—again ?"

"Thank God !" His ejaculation had been automatic, his mind not yet functioning to full embracement of antecedent complications of existence.

"*I don't know.*" And, with her slowly-uttered words, the mists had rolled back from memory—from that last five minutes in their gilded state-room—that coldly-bitter conflict arrested at its climax, suspended, unresolved——

He looked round now to her where she sat, shoulder-draped with her hair, found her eyes full on him.

"You're thinking of—Hennessey ?" she asked.

Hostility leaped up in him, sensitively suspicious of a taunt. He did not answer, lest he should break the tacit and precarious truce between them. In these three days he had not once mentioned business, nor indeed any of the thoughts that gnawed at him behind his constrained reserve ; his words to her, as brief and toneless as might be, were concerned only with the actualities of the moment. Her reference to Hennessey, evocative of one aspect of the ravaging preoccupations he concealed within himself—"mere sordid money !" he gibed, in savagely derisive recollection, "at which her soul ached !"—was a touch on the yet raw wound she had contemptuously inflicted. If he had brooded, he had reason enough. Heaven knew what was happening beyond that narrow sea-horizon which held him prisoner—a life-work, a whole empire of power, crumbling to ruin ! And one word from him, could he have transmitted it, would have saved it ! She went on :—

"You were talking in your sleep last night. I heard you and crawled out of my shelter to see what it was. For a moment I thought you had met someone else upon the island. But you were sound asleep, gnashing your teeth, and calling out 'Hennessey !—Hennessey !'" She half-smiled. "It would have scared him, I think, if he had heard you." He softened ; it was perhaps not a taunt. "It's hard luck on you, Antony."

HE looked at her, clad in that shredded rag of clothing, her hands scratched and bleeding from the labours of a primitive squaw, saw her suddenly, by contrast, in that world which had been hers. He saw her quietly smiling, beautiful, exquisitely gowned, in that palatial home where her slightest want was ministered-to by a multitude of deferential servants ; saw her queening it in those thronged receptions where he thrilled with the pride of precious possession, noted the awed admiration of other men, the whispering of the women she outshone ; saw her as he had seen her, in London, Paris, and Rome, with ambassadors, princes, aristocrats of that mediæval-rooted Europe bowing over her hand as they did not bow to other women—to Hennessey's wife, for example—their eyes lighting up in instinctive recognition of one of themselves. That was her life ; as his was the high-speed, subtly shrewd, dynamically forceful, triumphant conquest of control over the mass-needs of mankind ; not mere plundering ; he organized, gave service where was none before ; which incidentally resulted in that ever-swelling flood of wealth that made her possible as an acquisition. That was her life, her appointed destiny—to grace civilization with her costly perfection of femininity ; would be her life with—with George Addiscombe or another man (he had no insight into the depths of her ; could not measure her potentialities of basic feeling) when—when they got out of this, if ever they did, parted in cold fulfilment of that truncated crisis on the ship.

"It's hard luck on us both," he said, curtly.

She did not immediately answer ; spoke, when she did, out of another plane of thought.

"You must let me cook next time. I must learn to do things."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"As you like."

There was another silence before she spoke again, in a sudden seriousness of apprehension.

"Antony—supposing we *never* get picked up ?"

The corners of his mouth went down in a grim smile.

"Humorous, isn't it ?—we two—of all people !—I sympathize with you."

She looked at him, said nothing. Somehow he felt a bit of a brute. He cogitated for a moment or two, wishing at the back of his mind that he had some tobacco, chewed a reed of grass to help his thought.

"Look here, Adela," he said, suddenly, "we've got to face things out—as you say, we may never get picked up. We can't go

on with that—that little discussion of ours left unfinished between us."

"No," she said, staring out to the sea.

"Well, listen to what I've been thinking. All that business—we won't go into the rights and wrongs of it now—is outside this isolated little world into which we've been pitched like Adam and Eve. It belongs to that other world where I am Antony Drahan of the Transatlantic Trust and you are——"

"Your odalisque." She spoke still staring out to the sea.

"I don't quite know what that means—but I'll take your word for it. Anyway, this is the proposition I want to make. While we're here we'll shut down on that little argument, just as it was shut down for us on that ship—forget it. We'll make the best job we can of things, together, until we're picked up. And then——"

"And then——?" She still looked away from him.

"Then we go back to where we left off." He paused for a glance at her, chewed at his stiff grass. "I want to tell you this, Adela. I never supposed you were in love with me—as a matter of fact, I hadn't much time to go in for sentiment myself, as you know—but I had no idea you loathed me to that extent. I'm sorry. I wouldn't keep a dog that was unwilling, let alone a wife. So you can make your mind easy about that. And I'll provide for you too—so, whatever man you go to, you need never talk of being bought and paid for again. I dare say, from one point of view, there's some compensation due to you. For what has happened to have occurred, I must have made you pretty miserable." He paused for a moment, evidently crushing back the potentialities of that topic. "Is it a deal ?"

Her eyes came round to him, uncertain of him.

"You are bribing me again ?"

"No." He laughed grimly. "I'm not in a position to bribe. For the first time in my life I'm in a place where if I wrote a cheque for a million dollars it isn't any use. I'm merely making an amicable proposition. While we're on this island, we forget that we were ever man and wife. When we're picked up, we go back to where we left off. Is it a deal ?"

She nodded, with a grave smile, held out her hand to him.

"Until we're picked up——"

He sprang to his feet.

"Come along, then. Who knows ?—a ship may pass at any minute. We've got to get a beacon ready for her—that's the first thing—something that'll make a smoke visible twenty miles off."

He snatched up the hatchet, for which he had dived perilously many times that morning, strode off into the palm-grove. She walked at his side, silent through the interlaced and deepening shadows. He conned over one or two commonplace conversational openings in an awkwardly felt incumbency of speech, left them unsaid.

It was she who spoke first.

"Adam," she said, smiling at him a little timidly—their new relationship unexplored between them—"we're like that, aren't we ?—Adam and Eve—alone in a new beginning of the world."

He looked round to her, relaxed in their mutually-smiling glance.

"Sure," he agreed. "Adam and Eve"—he chuckled. "We might keep that up—it gives us a lead."

"Do you think they were a little frightened of each other at first ?" she mused, the smile of fanciful thought still on the face half-seen between her long hair. "There was everything to learn about each other."

He was silent for a moment.

"I guess we're like that too," he said, suddenly. He stopped before a gale-wrecked palm, full length in an offering of its crest of sere fronds. "What about this stuff for our fire ?"

THEY laboured through the afternoon, to and from the palm-grove and a little spur of the shore crowned by a bare outcrop of rock. The pile of dead palm-fronds, splintered wood, mosses, and dried grass rose imposingly. As they laboured, constraint dropped from them. They found themselves ever more frequently smiling at each other, talked with a direct and unembarrassed simplicity of speech unknown to them in that awkwardly incomplete intimacy when they called each other husband and wife in that New York house. He was surprised by her quick wit, by her unexpectedly sensible suggestions for the organization of their existence, as they came close together in their toil. He admired the unrepining pluckiness with which she accepted the situation—set it, privately, as a model for himself. He, too, would make the best of it, be cheerful—even if Hennessey was doing his diabolical damnedest. He pledged himself to it as he carried down armload after armload of fuel for that eventual fire which might, even yet, bring him face to face with Hennessey—in the nick of time ; laughed at her as she dubbed herself squaw.

At last the pyre was finished, head-high. They stood regarding it.

"I wonder when we shall light it ?" she said.

He shrugged his sun-red shoulders.

"Who knows ?" he replied. "Perhaps to-morrow—perhaps not for months. But

"Whichever one of us sees a sail or a smudge of smoke on the horizon must run and kindle this."

we must be always ready." He turned to her with a smile. "Now, Eve, since you're the squaw, it's your job to see that the cooking-fire never goes out. I used the last spark in my lighter on it yesterday. And whichever one of us sees a sail or a smudge of smoke on the horizon must run and kindle this with a brand from it, not wasting a moment. That's the first law in this Garden of Eden."

She smiled back at him, parting the loose hair from her brow.

"Adam has spoken!" she said.

Together they went along the curving shore to the encampment where the smoke of their cooking-fire still went up like a blue thread. He stood, hatchet in hand, contemplating the primitive palm-frond shelter he had put up for her that first day.

"I guess I'll put up a better shanty for you than that," he remarked. "Something with a little more room to it."

Her eyes came round to him, large-orbed,

as though something had stopped inside her. He met her glance.

"I don't read more into the bargain than you meant," he said. "I'll knock up a hut for myself over there."

Her visible relief hurt him, but he enforced stoicism upon himself. It was an explicit part of the bargain. As man and wife they had divorced that night in the suite-de-luxe of that ship surging blindly forward to the sudden shock upon the derelict. And presently another ship would come. . . . "Oh, *damn* George Addiscombe!" he muttered to himself as she went off, smiling back at him over a shoulder glint, through the dark cascade of unbound hair, to fulfil her squaw-task of gathering fuel.

He watched her as she disappeared between the palm-trunks, and a sudden pang went through him, a sudden hypernaturally acute perception of her white-limbed reality. It was as though he saw her for the first time—the woman he had called wife. "And there," the thought shot through him, "*there*—where I could give her everything—she loathed me, loathed me with an aching soul!" Here——? But this was only a game of make-believe, terminated the moment their beacon-smoke rose into the sky. Or was there, fugitive behind those eyes of hers, a something else—a something new—something that could not peep out when he came home, his soul harshly-exultant with a conflict won over telephone and tape-machine? He ridiculed himself, summoned up, for antidote, an all-too-vivid vision of her frigidly hostile dignity as she stood crumpling that damning cablegram, heard again that searing "Not with *you!*" Nevertheless, as he went about his new job of building her a shanty, his thoughts had to be forced to remain on the exasperating problem of what Hennessey might be up to at that moment.

THEY sat, in a warm night of unimaginable stars, near the glow of their camp-fire, red in the sombre blueness opening to the shore. Their conversation had ceased, minutes back. Its last note of quiet amicability still persisted through the silence. Their thoughts had gone far away.

He was remembering that it was still daylight in New York. He saw the deep cañons filled with feverishly hurrying men, dwarfed to ant-dimensions by the sky-towering buildings they had created. He saw himself in his office—the view right across the Hudson from his lofty window, perceived, as he had been wont to perceive it, from his desk, in the momentary pause of thought before giving a sharply decisive answer into the telephone which would ring again, to be vocal with a new voice and a new problem, as soon as he had clicked it back into its rest. A nostalgia for it all clutched him. He craved for the will-subdued excitement of conflict with distant mercilessly-shrewd hostile brains, personally unknown to him as often as not, whose intentions, vacillations, false-moves, he deduced with a flash of intuition from a cryptic word in a cablegram, a sudden fluctuation in a market-price; craved for the intoxicating flash of his interest from quarter to quarter of the globe. What was happening to those Anatolian oil-concessions? That freight-war he had initiated against the other South American lines—had Hardwick compromised, frightened at responsibility now that the Chief was not there to direct the fight? Or had Blydenstein and the rest picked up their courage, gone out for Hardwick's blood? And Columbia Steel? As sure as fate, the newspaper-headlines were black with "*Bottom Still Out Of Columbias*"; the bears would be whooping, yelling, delirious in their destructive delight. If only he could get back for just a day! He'd bet all he owned that, in his wild-Irishman eagerness, Hennessey had over-sold the market! If he could only get back——! He worried at his not yet customary beard.

And she? She spoke out of her reverie.

"It scarcely seems real to me. I have to force myself to believe that it was really I who lived in that great house of ours with everything done for me, with nothing to do but to get up, put on a new Paris frock, loll back in a motor-car, talk inanities with a lot of other idle women. That gala-night at the Opera—do you remember?—it was only a month ago to-day, the night before we started."

He did remember, remembered how mysteriously beautiful she had looked, Cleopatra-like in a magnificence of pearls—George Addiscombe had been there too—he suppressed the thought.

"Poor Eve!" he said.

She smiled at him, unexpectedly; her face just seen in the blue night.

"Poor Adam!"

He did not answer.

"Supposing a ship came now——" she commenced again, musingly. "And we went back to it all——"

He grunted, sceptically, staring out over the dark sea where no ship's light twinkled. He thought of the pyre, undisturbed as they had built it, ready if the moment came.

"And then we should say good-bye——" she went on, following her thought.

"Yes. Then we say good-bye," he agreed, curtly, his voice toneless.

"But now—after this—we shall shake hands when we say good-bye, sha'n't we?"

Her eyes came round to him in the night. He forbore to look at them.

"Yes. I guess we shall shake hands," he admitted.

"All we've done!" she said, reminiscently. "I understand now why—over there, in that other world we've dropped out of—you did so much. You can't help it. It's born in you, you are bound to organize, to create. Here, what you have done—out of nothing—it is wonderful! We have lived—almost civilized—even to the needles you hammered out of the nails of the boat, and the thread you twisted out of fibre. What a terrible brain yours is—always thinking!" She finished on a note of playful awe.

He smiled, flattered.

"You've done your share, too," he said. "Wonderfully. I'd never have guessed you had it in you."

She looked out to the dark sea.

"It's absurd to say it—but I've been happy," she murmured, rather to herself than to him.

There was a silence where he went suddenly tremulous.

"Adela!"

She turned to him, held up an admonishing finger.

"Eve," she corrected. "Adela is out there, in that other world beyond the horizon—waiting to part from her millionaire husband."

He took a deep breath.

"Eve!" His voice was unsteady. "Do you think that if we got back we might perhaps not—not part?"

He heard her breath also come in a deep inhalation as she stared out into the night.

"No," she said, in a low voice. "No. It would be the same thing. You're not changed. In a month you'd have no time for me. I couldn't start it again. Let us keep to our bargain—*Adam!*" She stressed the playful name as she forced a dimly-seen smile for him.

He sat dark and gloomy in this rebuff.

"Then you can't—in any circumstances—*love* me?" he said, with difficulty jerking out the two final words.

She sighed.

"Perhaps—if Adela and Antony Drahan weren't always ghosts waiting to jump back into life out there—if"—her smile came round to him and his intently peering eyes saw its little twist of pathetic wistfulness—"if Eve lived yet a little longer with her Adam in this place where a million-dollar cheque isn't any use." She sighed again. "Who knows?—*perhaps!*" Her little laugh quivered as she rose abruptly to her feet, eluded his grasp. "Good night!"

He sat staring into the red embers, craving for a cigar.

THE next day, at an hour when the sun dipped, immense and glowing, to the empty desolation of the ocean, he walked along the beach in quest of certain sea-birds' eggs that were edible enough when fresh-laid. Eve (it had become almost habit in his mind to call her so) was back at the encampment, busy at the cooking-fire. They had not again referred to the last night's topic; she had been disconcertingly normal when they met that morning. But all day they had gone roving together, the best of comrades on that make-believe plane to which they were pledged, in search of fresh supplies of bread-fruit. Her beauty, emphasized in its primitive exiguity of costume, haunted him as he walked now in solitude, conflicted with his exasperated imaginations of unchecked bear-raids in that far-off, unreachable Wall Street where James Hennessey was now assuredly an unconstitutional king. His glance roved idly, seeing nothing in the double intermingling procession of his thoughts; that elusive, tantalizing "*perhaps*," that quivering little laugh, ringing in his ears. "*A little longer*——" His thoughts vanished suddenly. He stopped, stared out to sea, incredulous of his vision. There, clear upon the yellowing horizon, was a smudge of smoke!

His first, almost automatic, impulse was to dash back to the cooking-fire for the brand that should light the signal, to shout as he ran. He turned for the action—saw her in the distance, her shoulders glimmering white as she bent over the fire—checked suddenly. She had not seen that far-off wisp of smoke; did not see him. He glanced round at the heaped-up pyre, close above him on its platform of rock; hesitated; looked again out to sea. The steamer was passing hull-down on the horizon, but from its bridge his sudden column of smoke would be clearly visible. Then he looked once more, furtively, towards the woman absorbed in her task, unconscious of this dreamed-of chance of rescue, the woman whose "*perhaps!*" rang in his ears. It was a libel of Mr. Antony Drahan's enemies to call him unscrupulous. He was not. He was fantastic almost in his adherence to the straight deal. But now Mr. Antony Drahan, grotesque in a single garment of much-tattered dress-trousers and tugging at a beard that would have made him almost unrecognizable to friends and enemies alike, was false to his gods. He stood stock-still, watching that far-off steamer-smoke grow faint and small upon the horizon.

"I guess Mr. Hennessey can wait," he muttered to himself.

He saw the last wisp of it disappear into the glowing semicircle of the sun.

He turned back, empty-handed, along the beach, feeling himself suddenly, sickeningly, a traitor. It wasn't playing the game. Adela had her right to rescue—to the resumption of the life that was hers; to that shake-hands and good-bye to which they were

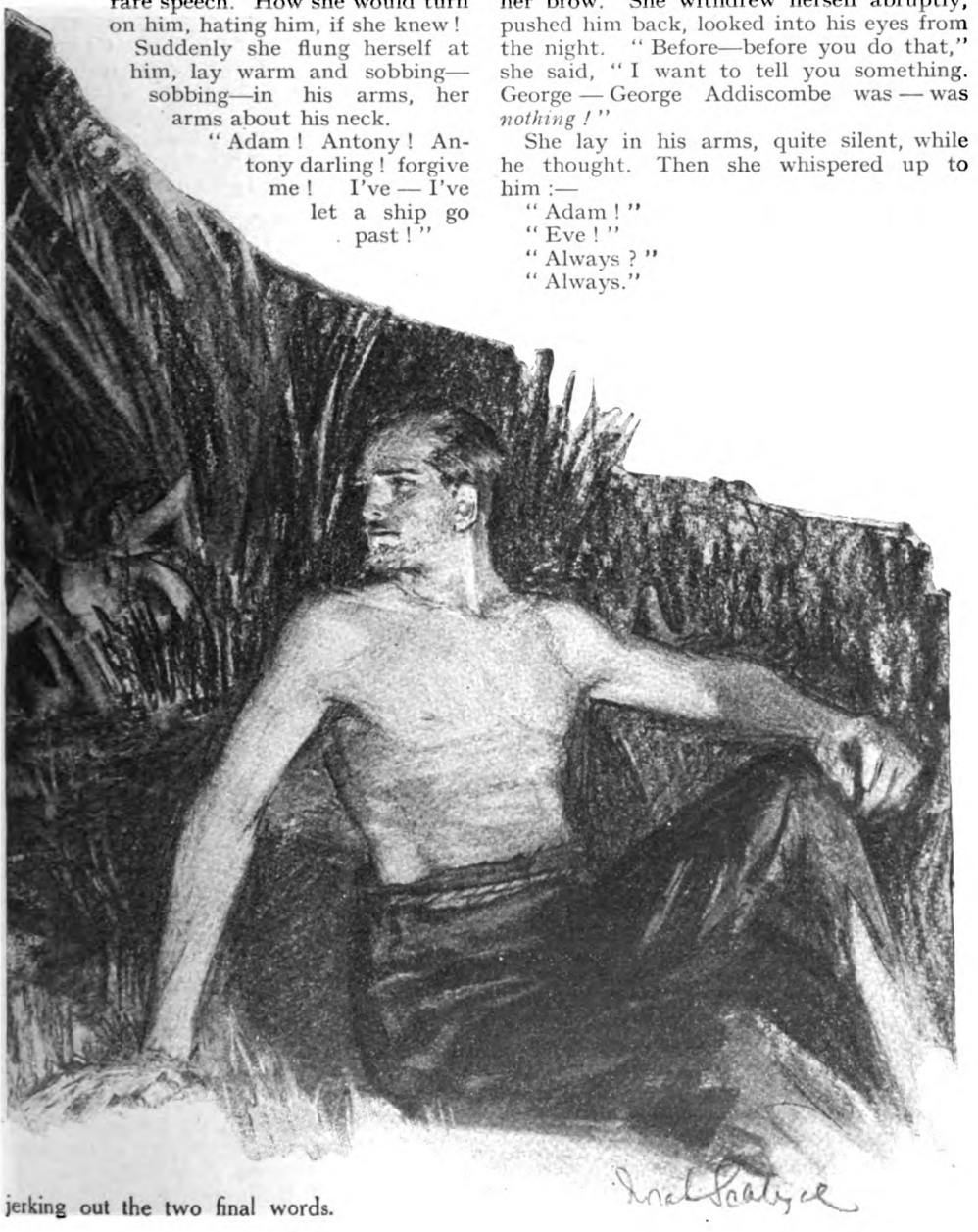
"Then you can't—in any circumstances—love me?" he said, with difficulty

pledged. He shrank, in his guilt of conscience, from meeting her eyes, from the necessary casual conversation with her, from even her mere propinquity. But he had to brace himself to it; did so, tried to smile as she looked up at him from the fire where the fish was ready broiled.

They were silent over their meal that night. The sun had gone down and the swift darkness shrouded them. They sat, both of them preoccupied, awkward in their rare speech. How she would turn on him, hating him, if she knew!

Suddenly she flung herself at him, lay warm and sobbing—sobbing—in his arms, her arms about his neck.

"Adam! Antony! Antony darling! forgive me! I've — I've let a ship go past!"



jerking out the two final words.

He gasped, the full implication of it breaking on him. *She* had let the ship go past!

He held her tight, soothed her, was once more not quite honest.

"Never mind, little Eve—Adela dear!—there's sure to be another."

She sobbed still as she clung to him.

"I—I don't care whether there is or not—so long as I've got you!" He bent his head down in sudden tenderness to kiss her brow. She withdrew herself abruptly, pushed him back, looked into his eyes from the night. "Before—before you do that," she said, "I want to tell you something. George — George Addiscombe was — was *nothing!*"

She lay in his arms, quite silent, while he thought. Then she whispered up to him:—

"Adam!"

"Eve!"

"Always?"

"Always."

When Yiso came to Limehouse

by

NELLIE TOM-GALLON and CALDER WILSON

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

BILL SIMMS wondered what had brought him out to Petticoat Lane on Sunday morning. In the lodging-house that he had patronized the night before, they let you stay in a bit longer on a Sunday—the convention of the Sabbath day of rest reaching even down to so low a depth as that.

Bill Simms said afterwards it was his luck that made him restless that morning. Luck had been jolly bad all the week, too; he muffed his tricks until he absolutely sweated with fear every time he spread his carpet and threw off the old overcoat that covered his dirty juggler's dress. All the more reason, therefore, that he should stay in peace and quiet on this day when he couldn't attempt to earn even the coppers that came his way on other days.

Anyway, here he was, in the same old overcoat that covered his finery on working days, wandering along the Lane, staring at the piles of old clothes on the barrows and stalls, looking longingly at the good ones, wishing he could get a new fit-out.

He gazed at a quite decently sound juggler's tights and singlet, decorated with the remains of spangles—wished with all his heart that he could replace his own broken-down street dress; next to it, hanging on the frame of the stall, was a complete blue cotton Japanese robe and wide trousers, the long loose sleeves filling softly in the wind, and waving and falling in a curious way, as though they beckoned to some other unseen wearer of a robe like them, in friendly greeting.

But out of the air only came an idea for Bill Simms, for suddenly he remembered that the rich and great of his profession in these days had abandoned tights and spangles—they died with the wonder-man, Paul Cinquevalli—and called themselves by names ending with "Soo," and clothed themselves in wondrous silks and embroideries from the East.

Bill knew in his scornful soul that they did it because it was so much easier to manipulate your tricks with wide sleeves and flowing robes to hide things under and in. Give some of these blighters on the West-end halls nothing but skin-tight clothing and they'd be helpless!—so he decided.

Then, with a little chill feeling creeping up his spine, he came back to his own affairs and remembered that during the last week he had muffed things badly all round. He frankly admitted to himself that the time was coming when he would have to have the help of a concealing dress such as the great ones up West sported. He looked again at the Japanese robe, swaying and twisting on the frame of the stall.

"Ten bob, an' it's yours, mate!" The woman in charge of the stall was quite civil. "Come, yer know it's cheap if yer wants to go to a fancy dress wiv yer bit o' skirt. It wouldn't be as low as that, I can blinkin' well tell yer, if it wasn't that it ain't everybody's idear of a winter costoom."

Bill Simms argued and bargained—helpless against the woman in charge of the stall. *She* knew perfectly well that he would not have been interested in the out-of-the-way dress if he hadn't really wanted it, so she stuck to her guns. The only thing she did give in over was to agree to put the dress aside till the next Sunday—because Bill literally hadn't got the money for it.

He went away with the fact in his mind that it was extremely unlikely that he *would* get the money—and a resolve to avoid the Lane next week.

But the fact that we no longer chink gold pleasantly in our pockets gave Bill Simms the chance to make a fresh start in the dress he had fixed his hopes on ; for when he had lived through four days of only very meagre earnings, on the Friday evening, treating himself to a modest glass of ale to raise his sinking spirits, luck flipped a scrap of paper in his direction.

The big, heavy man beside him, drinking a third whisky, suddenly pulled out a gold watch, swore when he saw what the time was, finished his drink and said good-night to the barmaid, and hurled himself through the swing doors all in the same instant.

And where his feet had hidden it till then lay a ten-shilling note. Bill grabbed it and ran out after the heavy man—he'd probably get a drink for his trouble was his instinct—in time to see the heavy figure jump successfully on a bus going at full speed.

Bill looked at the bit of paper, looked after the bus, then the note went into his pocket. The heavy man had looked the sort that could do without—probably wouldn't realize that he had lost it ; anyway, it was impossible to catch him.

And it meant the new start for Bill Simms. Sunday morning saw him in Petticoat Lane, handing over that note to the woman in charge of the stall, carrying off the bright cotton robe and trousers. He wasn't satisfied even then, for with a bit of cardboard he made himself a stencil of a crude but not ineffective design, and decorated the robe with red and yellow paint till it was a thing to wonder at.

Bill Simms argued and bargained—helpless against the woman in charge of the stall.

Perhaps it was the renewed hope that the costume gave him—perhaps the value of the hiding-places it afforded him in his tricks—but things began to look brighter for Bill on the very first day. The red and yellow balls seemed more intriguing when they came—surprisingly—out of the wide sleeves, before they were thrown into the air to weave intricate patterns before the eyes of his audience; the borrowed handkerchief rolled into a tight ball and vanished in the air, to be brought back in the form of dozens of coloured ones tied together by the corners, was easier—more effective—more productive of applause and coppers with the help of the Japanese dress than before.

Therefore things went well; Bill gradually extended his ground; knew that he was looked for in certain streets on certain exact days of the week. That was the way to work up a connection, and have the children ready at the windows with the coppers when the man with the lantern jaws and mop of grey hair, clothed in the very incongruous Japanese robe with its daubings of red and yellow paint, came twanging his one-stringed fiddle down the winter street.

IT was the day before one of those days on which the East-end holds holiday, and Bill started out as early as possible. He guessed money would be easier than usual on this day—he might work in two or three extra stands; people would pay up quicker for their amusement, and he be able to cut his programmes shorter than usual.

It was getting late in the afternoon; this would have to be the last stand for the day, Bill decided, when he came to Belting Street, down in Limehouse.

Belting Street is not a particularly cheerful place on a winter's afternoon—the mist rolls up from the river, and, if it is denied admittance to the little houses built close against the pavement, it still hangs itself about the walls, wreathes and twists round shutters, and clings to door jambs, waiting a chance to insinuate its coils into the ugly little boxes the moment there is a crack or cranny to slip through.

And to the big dark eyes of Nara Yamagata, peering out wistfully into the first illusive twists and wisps drifting up the street from the grey smooth water, Belting Street was the end of all hope and joy, the grave of life, as it appealed to her Japanese heart, longing for brightness and sun—for the sparkle of Eastern waters, the soft romantic shadow of Fujiyama over all things.

Nara was such a tiny doll-like figure, a something that almost should have been carefully packed in a cardboard box, with masses of tissue paper all round it to keep its quaint prettiness from being ruffled; that was how an imaginative onlooker would feel—until they saw Nara's face. And there rested tragedy and a woman's birthright of anxiety, though the creamy skin was smooth and the dark hair glossy and beautiful.

But in the bed behind Nara, where she looked so wistfully from the window into Belting Street, was the real doll—her baby boy, Kyto. And Kyto was indeed like a doll—for he lay very still—his big brown eyes staring up at the ceiling, watching the shadows the fire made there.

So he had lain for many heart-breaking days, till the little mother was in despair. Here in a strange land—the young husband who had brought her across so obediently from all the loved places that she knew, lying dead—Fate had laid a heavy hand on the flower-like, dainty life of Nara Yamagata.

She had come so tremblingly, even with her strong young husband, to this grey land of fogs and harsh voices—but he had the good position in the big bazaar where he was to sell cheap porcelain from his country at high prices. He had started well—had attracted business with his quaintness and stumbling English—then the climate had laid hold on him—a year ago; and he had left Nara with her baby and loneliness for the rest of her life.

With the thriftiness of her race she had managed to live sufficiently well with the savings that she had till she found work painting gauze fans for a big house. With the fatalism that was in her blood she settled down with her boy in the one room she could afford in Limehouse, resigned to the blow that Fate had dealt her. But when her little Kyto fell sick—then at last she was all in revolt against this last and heaviest blow.

The overworked, kindly doctor said there was nothing the matter with Kyto, yet nothing roused him—nothing interested him. He turned his head away from food, no matter how delicately the rice and fish was cooked, cried when Nara tried to coax him—whimpered to be let alone till her heart ached.

Day by day he was getting weaker—it seemed only that he could not breathe the air of this strange land. The kindly doctor told the little mother, before she made her graceful obeisance to speed his going, that she must rouse the baby, make him take an interest in something—or she would lose him.

She found that the one thing that would bring the eyes, that seemed already looking

beyond the walls of the dull room to some place no mortal can see, down to look at her was to tell Kyto the legends of old Japan in the simplest words. When she finished he would say :—

" I honourably thank my mother—more." Then he would fall asleep, and lie so still that Nara was frightened that never again would the eyes that had looked on this world for three years, and grown tired of it, open again.

Now only this very morning down in the poor street Nara had seen bunches of children hanging to the skirts of smiling mothers, busy on their careful shopping. And the children had all looked so well and healthy that her heart had ached for the child that was as the very fibre of her being, and lay there so still and straight.

Her anxiety—the isolation of her life—the silence of the room, seemed to-day to have brought Nara into a strange state of mind. It seemed almost as if life and the world of living men and women had forgotten her—passed her by and left her in some place that hung suspended between earth and the heaven to which she must go if Kyto was taken from her.

In that state of aloofness from things material, it did not surprise her when warning came that death was near for her baby. It came in the strangest way—the sound of a Japanese fiddle being softly played—the notes coming faintly, calling in a strange cadence of the land where she had been born, and where she had been wooed and wed, and her child born. So the street musicians had played in far-away Tokio when Nara, a girl with laughing bright eyes, had first seen the good husband her parents had chosen for her, and found him to her taste.

The dream was good, and if the honourable gods sent this warning that Kyto was to go to them—well, she must follow the baby, that was all.

Then Nara started and clasped her hands at her breast—for there came a horrible false note in the cadence—and the honourable gods do not play wrong notes ! Her dream was wiped away, she was the little frightened mother again, and the noise—it could not be called music—of the fiddle came from outside, in the misty, grey Belting Street.

On whispering, slippered feet Nara went across to the window and peered out again—and gripped at the curtain, wondering if she still dreamed—if the gods had really sent her a vision !

For down below her was a strange figure, in a dress that was friendly and familiar in her eyes, only that it had strange, ugly splashes of colour on it—and the figure sat on a little stool and played his one-stringed Japanese fiddle, and children and a few dock loafers crowded round and stared at the strange sight.

Then, when the crowd was big enough, the man in the Japanese dress threw on the ground a little straw mat, laid the fiddle down on it, and brought from hidden pockets various trifling objects, with which he proceeded to go through certain simple conjuring tricks.

NARA looked round to find that Kyto's eyes were turned towards the window—and her heart gave a great throb at the sight. Her baby must have heard that fiddle played, and some strange memory—perhaps an inherited one—had stirred interest in him.

Nara threw open the window and flung down one of her few coins when the performer had finished his tricks and was holding out a little metal bowl. And with extraordinary bravery she called down to the man with the lined face who had caught her penny so neatly.

" Wait, I pray—I come to speak to honourable magician," she said ; and the man, though astonished at the strangeness of the address, nodded in agreement that he should wait.

Nara gave another look at the child, still with his eyes turned to where he had heard a sound that interested him, then with wonderful, silent quickness she hurried down the stairs and out into the street.

Her hands clasped in appeal, she went, without the smallest fear, straight up to the man in the Japanese dress with its tawdry decorations.

" Oh, honourable and clever sir, I beg of you, save my little Kyto—my baby."

Bill Simms stared down at the mite of a woman in blank amazement. The poor little thing was crazy, of course, but it was such a queer sort of craziness. And Bill Simms had not had many appeals for help made to him in his lonely, struggling life.

" Why, missis, what's the matter with yer baby ? I ain't a doctor, y'know. P'r'aps you'd like me to go and get one for yer—eh ? I've finished for the day—it's gittin' too dark."

" Oh, no, I do not want the doctor—he is good and kind, but he cannot save my baby—and the gods have sent you to do it."

Of course, the little Chink woman was mad. Bill knew that. Still, she was wonderfully quiet and calm for a mad woman. In kindly fashion he started to soothe her, looking up at the house from which she had come, wondering if there was no one to look after her.

" It is a demon—one who has escaped

past Fo's two watch-dogs, and troubles my baby. The demon makes my baby sick and dull—the kind doctor man says he must be amused—Kwannon, the god of good women, who watched over me when he was born, has sent your honourable cleverness here to help me."

Demon—watch-dogs—Kwannon—honourable cleverness——! Small wonder that Bill Simms gasped, and lost his nerve and power of speech. When he recovered both he found that he was being dragged by eager, cold little hands towards the door from which Nara had emerged.

Bill hung back—for in Limehouse strange things happen to men lured by wonderful stories into strange houses; but he looked down into the pleading, dark mother-eyes—and to his credit did Nara no injustice, though he still protested.

"But, missis, I don't know nothink about your baby—I can't do anything—what on earth's the good of——"

"Honourable sir—if you will only come and make my baby look—see his mother again—make him understand that I need him—you have the so-very-beautiful balls—come and make him look at them—it will perhaps give the dogs of Fo a chance to catch the demon and take him away from my miserable dwelling."

"Oh, now I see—you want me to come and amuse your sick kid—is that it?" Bill Simms said, and gave up any attempt to keep away from the house door.

At his ready movement Nara made little pleased noises through her teeth—and hurried him the more up the narrow stairs, till they came to the room looking on the street where Kyto lay.

Nara never paused till they were within the room, and she had her captive safe there. Then she stood with her back against the door, panting and frightened.

Bill Simms went to one side of the bed and looked with kindly eyes at the mite of a boy lying there—and the eyes like brown velvet saw him, and moved to travel down his glowing dress with dawning interest.

Nara's pleased twittering, as of a mother-bird, started again, and she came across to the bed. In the brown velvet eyes she read a question.

"Yes, my babe, one of the honourable gods has deigned to come and see you—to make you happy, my Kyto. See—I raise you so that you may see him better."

Of course, the quick pattering Japanese was useless to Bill, so he asked, softly:—

"Who does the little chap think I am, missis? He looks a bit interested——"

"I have told him you are one of the honourable gods of my country—I think it had better be Yiso, the guardian of the little ones," Nara said, quite simply. "Would you like to be Yiso, sir?"

There was a queer, rather shy look on Bill Simms's face at the innocent question.

"Well, missis, we've got a God who looks after the little ones, though *His* name's a bit different from yours—sounds something like it, though—but you go ahead and call me anything you like that'll interest the little one. Do you want me to do a few tricks—will that please the little chap, do you think?"

"Oh, honourable sir, if you would only play with those wonderful balls of yours—the yellow ones, please. I could tell the little Kyto a story about them," Nara said, tears shining in her eyes, tears of hope and excitement.

"All right, go ahead and tell him his fairy-tale—then I'll give him a show—all to his own precious self—that'll fair astonish 'im. But cut along with the patter, missis."

RADIANT and glowing, Nara bent above the child, watching those solemn eyes that had been so near closing in a long sleep, and now were showing in their depths some faint wonder that made the mother-heart beat high.

"Kyto, see who has come to greet you from the Land of Shadows. See, it is Yiso—his honourable self. I told you that he was the guardian of all the little children."

Glory of glory, the baby lips opened after their weary silence, opened to ask:—

"I forget, my mother—where does Yiso come from?"

So small the whisper, it only seemed like a heavily-drawn breath to Bill Simms, smiling down in broad kindliness at the child.

"Yiso comes from the Underworld, my baby. There he guards the children who have come down to him to wait for their honourable parents—the big river that flows by the Field of Ten Thousand Ears of Rice; don't you remember, Kyto—I told you that when the babies tire of their play—see, here are his wide sleeves into which they creep to rest. And if sometimes they think they would like to play with the water—as babies do sometimes—then Yiso rolls it back so that they play in safety. You remember all that, do you not, my Kyto?"

"My mother—I am tired. Does Yiso come that I may creep into his sleeve and sleep?"

But at that Nara cried out in terror—and the big blue sleeve of Bill Simms's robe, which she had spread out with a dainty gesture as she told her legend, she flung from her as if it stung and burnt.

"No—no—my baby, my Kyto! Yiso

comes to tell you that you must stay here—with your mother. He is honourably anxious that you do so. He will be kind to you—show you the pretty yellow stars he plucks out of the sky for the children to play with—only promise that you will stay here with your miserable mother—say so!" Nara had dropped on her knees, and her terrified face was hidden in the pillow beside her baby.

"If the honourable god Yiso has come to tell me that I must stay—and not creep into his sleeve—I say so! Now will he please to show me the yellow stars he has plucked from the sky?"

So the bargain was made between the frantic little mother and her baby, and Nara got up from her knees, and curtsied deep to Bill Simms, smiling down at the quaint figures before him.

"Oh, honourable and clever sir, I beg of you, save my little Kyto—my baby."

"Honourable sir, I have told the very honourable lie and assured my Kyto that you are Yiso come from the Underworld, where you guard the little ones, and that you have brought with you some of the yellow stars you pluck from the sky for the children to play with. Will you please to show them to him?"

"Yellow stars—from the sky? Oh! my old balls you mean, missis. Well, here goes, then; and you must help me to make

a good show now. There's two or three frills and fusses I can put on to the tricks, if you help me."

And then, in breathless silence save for the rustle and swish of Bill Simms's simple apparatus of balls and sticks and glasses, began one of the strangest juggling performances ever given. Beside the little white bed, an oil lamp placed so as to throw as much light as possible on the quick-moving hands and bright-coloured balls, Bill Simms strained every nerve to interest and rouse a tiny child, dying for want of the brightness of his own native land—dying of the grim gloom and sorrow that rests on Limehouse—the place where the very air is saturated with the evil thoughts and desires of the dregs of humanity that drift from all corners of the earth, over the wide seas. The air is too heavy for a baby to breathe.

And Nara bent over the bed, watching her child, as in the long ago a mother bent over a manger, watching hers—and to each mother the baby compassed all that was worth while in the world they knew. And only the passing years could show what was the value of the frail life to mankind.

Presently, with a kindly smile, Bill Simms came to the end of all the tricks he knew, and bowed and nodded to the little head that was raised, all alert and interested by the marvels that had passed before its eyes.

And Kyto was pattering out quick words

And then began one of the strangest

in his native tongue—words at which his mother shook a very emphatic head.

" Wot's the kid say to it all, missis ? "

Nara looked up—still with troubled eyes.

" Kyto says am I sure that the honourable god Yiso does not wish Kyto to climb into his long sleeve and go away with him—to play in the Field of Ten Thousand Ears of Rice ? You have enchanted him, though you have roused him to such beautiful life."

Then, in the very human heart of a Cockney broken-down street juggler wisdom was born, and he clinched the business of holding back this baby from the dark shape that held out hands to seize it.

" Tell the kid, missis, that I brought him the stars down from the sky to see—and I'm leavin' one of 'em for 'im to play with. But this 'ere yellow star—it'll go back to the sky—plump—and stick there—if 'e doesn't make 'aste and run about, and get well enough for you to take him back 'ome again. Can you do that, by the way ? "

" Oh, yes—if only my boy will get well enough for the voyage, I will manage it somehow—and leave the honourable grave of my husband to be cared for in memory only. But he will understand that I must save our son—say so ! "

" Why, yes, I do 'say so' to that. You upsticks and get out of here right away, missis—and good luck go with you. Now then, sonny, look—here's the star from the sky that the old blighter Yiso 'as brought you. And remember—it goes back to the sky if you don't make haste and get well."

Bill made his best pseudo-Eastern bow then, and turned with a dignified swing of his gaudy robe, to go out of that room of such strange happenings.

But little Nara was on her knees at his feet, kissing his rough weather-broken hands—and when he drew them away Bill Simms hid them deep in those long sleeves of his—for they were wet with tears.

On the bed Kyto—alive and solemnly determined to carry out the bargain—bent forward and picked up the common, soiled, yellow-covered juggler's ball; put it to his forehead and made the Seven Bows of Reverence required as homage to a sacred thing.

juggling performances ever given.

A SCRAP OF PAPER

BY

"SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

"ISN'T that Jack Delman, the polo-player?" I remarked to my companion as he resumed his seat.

My eyes idly followed the two people he had been speaking to, as they made their way out of the restaurant. The man, bronzed, clean-cut, hard-as-nails, typical of all that is best in English athleticism; the woman, graceful, fair, and utterly charming without being exactly pretty. They had paused by our table and spoken to the man I was dining with—spoken as people speak to a very old friend. And he had answered in the same strain. Then they had passed on, and Eustace Nolan, my companion, eminent critic and writer of *belles-lettres*, had sat down again with a faint reminiscent smile. He, too, watched them in silence until they were out of sight; then with the smile still on his lips he turned to me.

"Quite right," he remarked. "That's Jack Delman—polo-player, master of hounds, cricketer, golfer, etc., etc. And with him was Loraine Delman—his wife."

"Loraine Delman!" I repeated. "Surely the name is familiar!"

Eustace Nolan's smile expanded.

"To all save the utter Philistines even more so than his. She writes books, and very good books. Even I, who impartially damn everybody who practises that nefarious trade, have to admit they're good."

"Of course," I murmured, "I remember now." And then for want of something to say I continued, idly: "A rather daring experiment in the marriage-line; there can't be much in common between them. Do they get on well?"

"They didn't look as if they were on the verge of divorce, did they?" He was still smiling gently to himself, as a man smiles

Copyright, 1923, by H. C. McNeile.

who enjoys some secret thoughts of his own. " And yet she neither hunts—nor does she play either golf or tennis."

" A case of opposites hitting it off, I suppose." And I glanced across at him. " What the dickens are you smiling about in that aggravating way ? "

He answered with another question.

" Did you happen to notice that pearl locket she was wearing ? "

" I did. Why ? "

" What do you think is inside it ? "

I raised my eyebrows.

" My dear old boy," I remarked, " as to the best of my belief this is the first time I've ever seen her, how should I possibly know ? Presumably a miniature of her husband—or of one of the children, if she's got any."

He lit a cigar with the solemnity of the true connoisseur before he spoke again.

" In that locket," he said, thoughtfully, " is the foundation of one of the happiest married lives that it has ever been my fortune to come in contact with—the married life of those two who have just left the restaurant. It consists of a scrap of paper, and on that scrap of paper is written as follows : ' Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.' "

For a moment or two I thought he was joking. The smile still lingered on his lips, while he studied the lighted end of his cigar critically. Apparently satisfied, he looked across at me.

" Just that—and nothing more," he continued. " And yet it had nothing whatever to do with that gentleman's logic ; rather was it all quite illogical."

" Confound you, Eustace," I cried, " cease riddling me with riddles. What magic charm did such a bald and uninteresting fact work ? And how ? And why ? You've roused my curiosity ; now you've got to satisfy it."

For a while he hesitated ; then he beckoned for the bill.

" That's fair," he said, " though I don't know whether I'm justified in doing so. You see—it's not my secret. It's just one of those things which one comes across in life which belong to the sacred intimacy of others. But it's also one of those things which it does one good to remember. Such a small thing—and yet such a big one. So I just want your promise that it won't go farther, and then, if you care to, we'll stroll round to my rooms and I'll tell you the story of that scrap of paper."

" You have my promise, of course," I answered, and a few minutes later we were strolling along Piccadilly to his flat in Jermyn Street.

" I'VE known Loraine Delman," he began, when we were comfortably settled, " ever since she was the height of that coal-scuttle. She used, at the age of fourteen, to come and show me her immature attempts at writing—and even at that age I could see possibilities. She had to a marked extent what for want of a better phrase I will call the dramatic sense. In her baby way she could tell a story—and if only a few of our present-day writers would concentrate on that rather than on dissecting their kedgeree minds there would be the devil of a number more books sold.

" Right from the start I encouraged her to persevere. And I very soon realized that it was not just the whim of a growing girl. She was keen, and she had in her that creative impulse which must express itself. It is present in all of us—though modern civilization decrees that only the minority can attempt to give it its natural outlet. It so frequently fails to provide one with that necessary commodity — bread and butter.

" In her case it was different. A kindly aunt had died and left Loraine all her money, so that at the age of nineteen she had a thousand a year of her own, which was quite enough and yet not too much. At the age of twenty-one she completed her first book. She sent it to me, and I realized as soon as I had read it that all my hopes were going to be fulfilled. There were faults in it, of course—faults of technique, faults of construction—but what did that matter ? The vital spark was there—the life spark. And that's all that counts. Technique can be acquired ; the spark is given and can never be bought.

" However, this isn't a dissertation on the craft of writing. She got her first book published without the slightest difficulty. She'd have had none even without my help, but a private word from me settled things quicker. And a year later she finished her second. It fulfilled all the promise of the first, and made a great advance on it. In fact, it settled definitely that there was a big future in front of her, and, mentally, I sat down to watch it develop."

With a faint smile he pitched the butt-end of his cigar into the grate.

" It came almost as a shock to me when she wrote and told me that she was engaged. I suppose it hadn't occurred to me that she was grown-up ; when you've dandled 'em as kids on your knee, and pulled the pig-tails of flapper-hood—I may say that it was before the days when the ambition of every girl was to make her head like a cedar-mop broom—you're apt to forget that they are grown-up. So one Sunday I went off to see the young man.

"Well, you know Jack Delman—so I won't describe him physically. And six years ago he was just the same—a perfect young specimen of manhood. How he'd met her and why he'd fallen in love with her, with her totally dissimilar tastes, is beside the point. All that matters is that they were perfectly dotty about one another, and since there was no reason for delay they intended to get married at once. He had money of his own and was a year older than she was—so that from the accepted standpoint it was a most satisfactory match. They would get a house in a hunting country, with a flat in London as well. And he would hunt and shoot and play polo—and she would have her work to occupy her. Also, later on, they were going to travel a bit. Everything quite idyllic. In fact, so idyllic that one or two faint and unworthy doubts I had in my mind almost died. Almost—not quite; I'm a cynical blighter, I fear.

"However, I had to confess to myself that there was no justification for them when I went to stay at their place soon after they returned from their honeymoon. Jack took me all round the stables—a form of entertainment which I particularly dread, as my knowledge of horses is confined to which end goes first. Then he took me on at tennis—a distressing affair, when I only succeeded in connecting with the ball twice, and then in the wrong direction. After that he gave up the unequal contest and left me to my own devices and Loraine.

"She was in the middle of a new book, and we discussed it in the sacred holy of holies which was set apart for her writing. I read a bit of it, with intense curiosity. What effect had marriage with this enthusiastic ball-striker had on her work? And I had to confess to myself that not only had it not suffered, but that it had improved.

"'Happy, my dear?' I said to her, as she slipped her arm through mine in the garden before dinner.

"'Utterly, completely, and absolutely,' she answered, and she certainly looked it.

"So did he; I've never seen a couple more intensely happy than they both seemed. He would ask her with intense solemnity if Mabel had been kissed by the villain yet; she would counter with tender inquiries as to the right front leg of one of his horses. And then they'd laugh and look at one another, while I pretended not to notice. For the look wasn't hard to interpret, and horses and books and ball games and work are just the merest etceteras of life when a man and a woman feel that way."

He paused and pushed the whisky in my direction.

"Help yourself, old man; I'm coming to our friend Aristotle soon. I didn't see them again for over two years: I was in America most of the time. And when I came back I had a lot of things to do which kept me in London. But one day at the club I ran into her publisher, and we lunched together. A human fellow—very human, who took a real interest in his authors as well as in their books.

"'Seen your *protégée* lately?' he asked, suddenly. 'Loraine Delman, I mean.'

"I told him I was only just back from the States and hadn't seen anybody.

"'A clinking good book—that last one of hers,' I continued. 'Or perhaps there is yet another that I haven't seen?'

"'There is,' he said, and his tone of voice made me look at him nervously.

"'What's the matter with it?' I asked. 'Isn't it up to form?'

"'Yes and no,' he answered, thoughtfully. 'It's good in its way—very good. Almost the best she's done, in fact. But there's a new note in it, Nolan—and one I'm sorry to see.'

"'And that is?' I asked.

"'Bitterness. I wondered if you could supply the clue.' And then he added as an after-thought: 'You know there was a baby, don't you?'

"'I didn't,' I said, 'but I'm not surprised.'

"'It died,' he remarked.

"'By Jove! I am out of things,' I cried. 'I wish I'd known: I'd have written to her. But perhaps that accounts for the bitterness.'

"'Perhaps it does,' he said, but it struck me he didn't think so.

"ANYWAY, what he said quite decided me. I should have gone down anyway to look them up; now I made up my mind to go at once. Loraine bitter! I didn't like the sound of that at all. Though, Heaven knows, the loss of her first kid might make any woman so.

"I wrote her a line telling her I was back, and by return I got a letter asking me to go and stay for as long as I liked. So down I went to their charming house in the hunting country, determined to solve the mystery of Loraine's bitterness. There was certainly no trace of it visible as she greeted me when I arrived about tea-time. She was just her own charming self, and for a few minutes we talked about my trip to America. Then the maid brought tea and lit the lamps, and we got down to more personal topics.

"'Where is Jack?' I asked, as she handed me my cup.

"'My dear Eustace,' she answered, with a faint smile, 'where do you think? Out

hunting, of course. He won't be back till late this evening. The meet was at the other side of the county.'

" ' I see,' I murmured. ' Only, perceiving the third cup, I wondered.'

" ' Hubert Daventry said he might drop in,' she answered, casually. ' Do you know him by any chance ? '

" ' The artist, do you mean ? ' and she nodded. ' Oh, yes, I know him.'

" I suppose there was something in the tone of my voice that said more than the mere words, for she looked at me quickly.

" ' Don't you like him ? '

" ' My dear, I only know him very slightly,' I replied, and changed the conversation.

" Now it was quite true that I did only know Hubert Daventry very slightly, but I knew his reputation very well. And he was one of the last men in the world whom I would have chosen to have hanging round any woman who was anything to do with me. Heaven knows, I'm not and never have been particularly squeamish, but Daventry was a putrid specimen. Clever, very good-looking, and most amusing—his speciality was other men's wives. There was a case of a fellow in some cavalry regiment who flogged him almost unconscious in Jermyn Street one night. . . . So you get the man. And, as so often happens, women didn't spot it—until it was too late. Why they don't recognize that particular brand is one of the unexplained mysteries, but there it is.

" And yet I had to admit to myself when he came in that there was nothing particularly spottable about him. The conversation while he remained was general; he told a couple of stories about men I knew extremely well; he seemed what, in fact, he was, an agreeable, well-bred man of the world.

" It was as he rose to go that he made the only remark which could possibly be construed into something slightly personal.

" ' I think I've got exactly what you want, Mrs. Delman. It took a bit of finding, and it will take more keeping. So you must let me know as soon as possible what you finally decide.'

" ' I will,' she said. ' And thank you most awfully.'

" With that he was gone, and she turned to me.

" ' He's looking for a small flat for me in London,' she said, quietly. ' They seem very hard to get.'

" ' But are you thinking of leaving this house ? ' I asked, surprised. ' I thought you loved it.'

" Her hands clenched at her sides.

" ' It stifles me, Eustace—utterly stifles me. From morning to night the atmosphere is concentrated sport, sport, sport. The people round here think of nothing else; Jack thinks of nothing else. And if it wasn't for Hubert Daventry I don't know what I'd do. He's the only person with whom it is possible to obtain five minutes' intelligent conversation.'

" So it had come to that, had it ?

" ' My dear,' I said, gently, ' I'm sorry. Aren't things well with you and Jack ? '

" She didn't answer for a time, and when she did it was in a rather unexpected way.

" ' My new book,' she said, ' is utterly rotten. I'm under no delusions: it's rotten.'

" A STEP sounded in the hall, and she gripped my arm.

" ' Not a word to Jack. I trust you.'

" The next moment he came in—radiant with health, his pink coat covered with mud.

" ' Great to see you, old man ! ' he cried. ' Splendid run. Ten-mile point and pulled him down in the open.'

" He bubbled with it. We got the run field by field and spinney by spinney, and while he was drinking his whisky-and-soda I caught Loraine's eye. And the look she gave me said as plainly as if she had spoken: ' Now you can judge for yourself.' "

Nolan paused and lit a cigarette.

" It is boring," he continued, " there's no good denying it. Hunting shop to people who don't hunt is a dreadful infliction, and as I went up to dress for dinner things were clearer. And the clearer they became the more sorry I was. Though I'm not a marrying man myself, I've got illusions on the subject. Moreover, I loved both of them.

" At dinner that night things became clearer still. There were only the three of us, and they each talked to me rather than to one another. To the outsider everything was quite normal; to me, who had known them in the past, the change was marked. No more of those little intimate jokes and leg-pulls, but just reserve. And it was I who quite unwittingly introduced the personal element by mentioning Daventry. I regretted it the instant after, but the mischief was done.

" Jack frowned heavily, and Loraine was up in arms at once.

" ' He was having tea here this afternoon, Jack,' she said, clearly.

" ' Well, he's a damned outsider,' returned her husband. ' Don't you agree with me, Eustace ? '

" ' Of course, he doesn't hunt,' said Loraine, sweetly.

" Jack laughed. ' Hunt ! That swab ! Why, he'd fall off a horse walking along the road.'

"'But then he does know that Rachmaninoff didn't build the Pyramids,' said his wife still more sweetly, and Jack flushed and dried up.

"It was all so foolish, and so easy, and so pathetic. And the devil of it was that there seemed to be nothing to do. However well you know two people, you can't interfere in a show of that sort unless you're specifically asked to. And even then the betting is that you will incur the undying enmity of both. The cure has got to come from within and not without, and during the next two or three days I began to fear that things had gone too far for any cure. Every night after dinner Jack retired to his study, and long after I'd gone to bed I used to hear him coming upstairs. He said nothing to me, and she didn't allude to the subject again—but it was obvious that things couldn't go on as they were. Something would have to happen, and happen soon. It did: on the night but one before I was due to go. Jack was dining out at some house in the neighbourhood with a bachelor party who were down for the hunting, and Loraine and I dined alone.

"IT was a crisp, frosty night, and after dinner we decided to go for a walk. For a long time we walked in silence, and then she deliberately reverted to the subject of her relations with Jack. Step by step she traced them, and I listened with a hopeless sort of feeling. Had they come to the parting of the roads, or had they not? That was the question—reiterated again and again.

"'I don't know what to do, Eustace,' she said, as we got back to the house again and went into the drawing-room. 'He'd be happy enough away from me once the shock was over. I'm no companion to him.'

"'You were once, my dear,' I said. 'You were both such wonderful pals.'

"'Yes—we were once,' she echoed, wearily. 'But you can't stand still, Eustace. Oh, it isn't his fault, and I don't think it's mine. It's just happened—that's all. He thinks of nothing, lives for nothing, cares for nothing but sport. Why, he was hunting four days after Billy died.'

"She was looking at a photograph in a silver frame—the photograph of her baby. And in her eyes was a look of passionate, yearning love.

"'But, dear girl,' I said, "that doesn't mean he didn't care. Men take things like that differently to women.'

"'Anyway, it doesn't matter,' she cried. 'Don't let's think about that. The point is what to do now. I can't work in this house; my nerves are all on edge. And am I to sacrifice the whole of my career, just because I haven't the nerve to take a final step to end it? Look at him! He goes off every night to his study to read some trashy sporting novel, and then he objects to my friends.'

"'Loraine,' I said, quietly, 'Daventry is a bit of a rotter.'

"'He's amusing, anyway, and surely I'm old enough to take care of myself,' she answered. 'No, Eustace—it's the old question. I was a fool to think that I could escape it. Just at first everything was wonderful; but now——'

"She paused and stared at the fire.

"'Don't you love him any more, my dear?' I asked, gently.

"'Love him! Oh, yes—I still love him, I suppose. In a way. But even so, love isn't everything, Eustace.'

"'It's damned near it,' I said. 'And it seems to me that once you've had the wonderful love which you and Jack had for one another you ought to think, and go on thinking again and again, before you cut it out of your life.'

"She made a little gesture of impatience.

"'I've been thinking for a year,' she answered. 'Oh, Eustace—I want to be free—free. And I can never be free in this house.'

"Free. The cry of all the ages. And what a futile cry it is! As if any human being can ever be free in the true sense of the word! We're all dependent on someone, or they're dependent on us. But all I said was:—

"'You were free enough here, Loraine, three years ago. A big love is the nearest approach to freedom you can have. It washes out selfishness.'

"But she wouldn't listen, and I knew it was best for her to get it off her mind. It wasn't as if she was going to leave Jack for good; they could still meet and spend some of their time together. If he wanted to—that's to say.

"'But don't you know that he wants to?' I said. 'I'm not much of a judge on such matters, but I've seen him looking at you when you didn't know he was, and, Loraine, I don't think he's altered.'

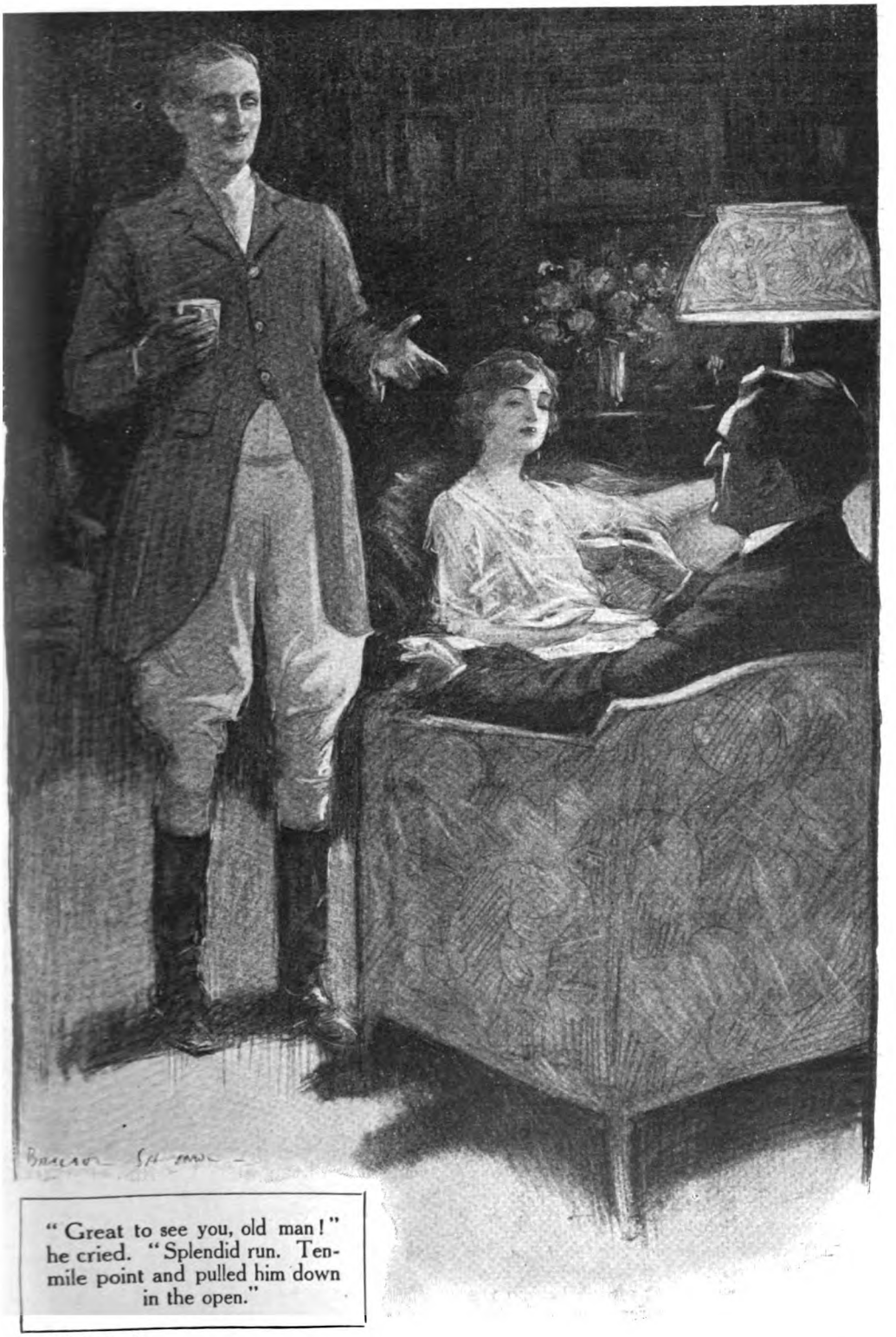
"She shook her head.

"'Oh, yes, he has! We've both altered. It's no one's fault—it's just happened.'

"Again and again she said that, and at length I saw there was no good going on.

"'If you feel that way—you'd better go, my dear. Perhaps you'll change your mind once you've taken the step.'

"'If only he wasn't so awfully decent,' she said, quietly, sitting down and cupping her hands under her chin. 'So wonderfully white. I've never seen Jack do a rotten thing—get drunk or make a beast of him-



"Great to see you, old man!" he cried. "Splendid run. Ten-mile point and pulled him down in the open."

self. Or even lose his temper. It's that which makes it so hard. I wouldn't hurt him, Eustace, for the world.'

"And then I realized. She was just arguing aloud; trying to convince herself—not me.

"'You admit it will hurt him, then, if you go?' I said.

"'It'll hurt me, too, in a way,' she said, standing up suddenly. 'Oh, don't you see that's the whole point. One part of me longs to be free; the other longs for the love and—and the passion of when we were first married. And between the two I'm on the rack.'

"Career versus love; the old story. And the decision must lie with her, and her alone. Only in her case the love was buried. I couldn't believe it was dead, somehow—though too long burial is a dangerous thing.

"'If only he wasn't so decent and straight,' she repeated, wearily. 'Anyway, let's go to bed.'

"AND at that moment the door opened and Jack entered. For a moment I stared at him in amazement, and I heard Loraine catch her breath. For Jack Delman was what I had never seen him before—drunk. Not tight, mark you—not merely merry, but blind drunk. He lurched to a chair, and sat there staring at us foolishly. His tie was half off, his waistcoat undone, and he wasn't a pleasant spectacle.

"'Jack!' gasped his wife. 'What's the matter with you?'

"'Matter, my dear,' he said, unsteadily. 'Nothing matter. I'se little—little bit—'toxicated. Thatsh all.'

"She swung round on me, and there was a new look in her eyes.

"'That settles it,' she said, quietly, and with that she left the room.

"The last straw, and I swore inwardly. If only he hadn't got drunk on that of all nights; if only, even, he'd gone straight to his own room. Upstairs the door of her room banged, and I turned to Jack.

"'I'll help you up to bed,' I said, curtly, and he laughed.

"'Thank you, Eustace, for your well-meant offer of assistance,' he answered, 'but I'm quite capable of getting there myself. Pretty good effort on my part, wasn't it?'

"I stared at him in amazement.

"'Good Lord, you're not drunk!' I said, foolishly.

"'Far from it,' he replied.

"'Then what the devil——' I began.

"'Oh, don't let's go over it again,' he broke in wearily. 'I happened to have been sitting over in that alcove behind the curtain in the window, reading one of my trashy hunting novels. And I'm afraid I've been eavesdropping.'

"'But, good heavens, old man!' I cried, 'why didn't you come out?'

"He stared at me sombrely.

"'What would have been the good?' he answered. 'We all know where we stand now. I'm not particularly bright, Eustace, as you heard to-night. My God is sport—and this house stifles her.' For a moment I thought he was going to break down. 'It didn't stifle her when we first came to it. Why, it was on that sofa that we used to discuss her first book after we got married.'

"He turned away, and was silent for a while.

"'If she wants to go, Eustace—she shall go. It's not fair to spoil her life—though, God knows, I've tried not to. I know I can't talk to her; I know I'm a perfect damned fool. But I'd hoped——' He paused abruptly, and stared at the window with a weary little smile that I had no clue to. 'However, that's over now. And I don't suppose it would have been much use anyway. But oh! great heavens, it's like cutting out part of one's life.'

"He buried his head in his hands, and his shoulders heaved.

"'Decent,' he muttered. 'What's the use of that? Once a man and a woman have been mates—decency is no good. I've been a fool, Eustace—all through. It didn't occur to me to sit moping after the kid died—though I loved him as much as she did. But it hurt her; I see it now.'

"Once again he was silent; then he swung round.

"'You're not to tell her,' he cried. 'You're to let her go on thinking I was drunk to-night. I got the idea, you see, from what she said—and got out through the window. Perhaps later on, when she's given things a trial—you might—let her know. And until then—look after her, old man. It's not her women pals I mind, though they frighten me to death—but if that sweep Daventry——'

"He paused and his fists clenched.

"'I'll look after her, Jack,' I said, gruffly. The momentary passion at the thought of Daventry had died out of his eyes; they were just hopelessly weary again.

"'Thanks,' he said. 'And if you don't mind I think I'll go to bed now.'

"I heard him go upstairs to his own room, and after a while I switched off the lights and followed. Things had come to a head with a vengeance, but maybe it was all for the best. We'd let her have her way, and later on, when a little more water had passed under the bridge, I'd tell her."

Nolan smiled faintly, and helped himself to a whisky-and-soda.

She paused and stared at the fire. "Don't you love him any more, my dear?" I asked, gently.

"Thus does man propose: Fate works otherwise. When I got down the next morning Jack had already gone out—hunting again. And shortly after Loraine came down herself. With an expressionless face she glanced at her husband's used plate, but she made no remark. And it was not till after breakfast that she told me she had written to Daventry saying she would take the flat.

"'It's not merely because of what happened last night, Eustace,' she remarked, quietly. 'That was just the final thing that settled it. And, in a way, I'm glad.'

"But was she? I watched her all that day as she moved about the house—fingering this, touching that, as if she were saying good-bye. And a dozen times the truth trembled on the tip of my tongue, but I bit it back. If things were to come right in the long run, it would be better to leave it for the present—much better. Later on I'd do it: it would keep. Just now she might think it was a put-up job—an excuse.

"IT was about three o'clock that she suddenly came into the room where I was doing some overdue work.

"'Eustace,' she said, and her voice was numb, 'they're bringing something up the drive. Something on a stretcher. Will you come?'

"For a moment I didn't understand; then I dashed to the front door. It was Jack right enough, and from the colour of his face I feared the worst.

"'Is he dead?' I muttered, stupidly.

"'No, sir,' said one of the men carrying him, 'but he's had a terrible fall. Over wire. Horse broke its back.'

"'Take him upstairs,' said Loraine, calmly. 'And, Eustace, please 'phone for the doctor.'

"She took charge of everything, and I ran about from room to room feeling the usual unutterable nuisance a man does in such circumstances. The doctor came, made his examination, and departed rubbing his hands.

"'No need for anxiety, Mrs. Delman,' he announced. 'He'll be hunting again in a month. But you must really speak to your young man, you know. He never turns his head from anything, but to-day he was more reckless than ever. We can't have him breaking his neck.'

"'Of course, this alters it, Eustace,' she said when the doctor had gone. 'I can't go until he's fit again.'

"And the truth trembled for the thirteenth time—trembled and came out. She listened to me with dawning amazement on her face, and when I'd finished she rose unsteadily to her feet.

"'Pretending,' she whispered. 'So as to give me a chance. Oh, thank God! thank God! my man—you weren't killed.' She walked over to the window and stood staring out. And then suddenly she bent forward, and took two books from behind the cushion on the seat.

"For a while she stared at them uncomprehendingly, and then I heard her whisper very low: 'Eustace—come here.'

"I crossed to her side, and together we looked at the books. One was a notebook filled with Jack's scrawling handwriting; the other was a volume of an Encyclopædia. And in it was a bit of paper on which was written—'Aristotle. Born 384 B.C. Died 322.'

"The books fell from her hands, and the next moment she was sobbing her heart out in my arms.

"'So that's what he went to his study for—and I talked about trashy hunting novels.'

"I confess that for the life of me I couldn't speak. I'd got the clue now to that twisted smile of his last night—dear lad.

"'Oh, you precious bit of paper!' she cried, kissing old Aristotle. And then she stared at me through her tear-drenched eyes.

"'Riding more recklessly than ever to-day. Oh, Jack—you've just got to forgive me. Go up and see him, Eustace: tell him you've told me. And ask him if I may come.'"

Again Nolan smiled quietly.

"As I say, I'm not a marrying man—but I have illusions. And they weren't shattered that afternoon. I just heard his voice—a bit low and shaky—as she came past me to his bedside; I just saw her go down on her knees beside him with a little sobbing cry. And then I went out and left them. And I suppose things must have been all right, for about two hours later Hubert Daventry rang up. He wanted to speak to Loraine. So I called through the door to tell her.

"They both answered.

"She said: 'Tell him I don't want his beastly flat.'

"He said: 'Tell him to go to blazes.'"

HOW CONJURING TRICKS ARE INVENTED

An Interview with Mr. Henry Bate.

MR. HENRY BATE.

Although the name of Mr. Henry Bate is unknown to the general public, he is one of the most active members of that exclusive body known as the Inner Magic Circle. His lifetime has been devoted to the invention and construction of conjuring tricks, ranging from the simplest parlour magic for amateurs to some of the most famous stage illusions presented by such well-known magicians as David Devant, J. N. Maskelyne, Chung Ling Soo, De Biere, and many others. In the following interview he relates, for the first time, many amusing experiences of life behind the scenes with famous conjurers, and, incidentally, discloses some interesting secrets of magic, including a "Vanishing Lady" illusion which can be performed in an ordinary drawing-room.

IF ever you have occasion to vanish an elephant, and you seek the advice of a famous magician as to how to go about it, he will probably refer you to Mr. Henry Bate. It may be that you have never heard of the gentleman, but if you intend to amuse your friends this winter by doing conjuring tricks with elephants—or, for that matter, any other objects—it is high time that you were introduced to him. Everybody who is anybody in magic knows Mr. Bate. He is the magicians' "universal provider," a past-master in the art of manufacturing magical apparatus, a man whose name and work are both regarded by the leading illusionists as "something to conjure with." To him the mechanical side of conjuring is an open book.

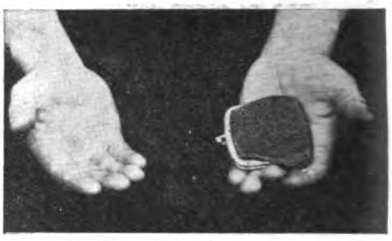
From what I know of Mr. Bate, I do not think that a request to vanish an elephant would perturb him in the least. He would probably stroke his chin thoughtfully and reply, "Yes—I *can* do that, but wouldn't it be an improvement if, after making your elephant disappear, we were to produce a hippopotamus in its place?" You see, he has had nearly forty years of this sort of thing, and his inventive brain is ready to cope with almost any magical problem you like to set him. Ever since his schooldays he has been puzzling out ways and means of mystifying his fellows.

"In common with most boys," he told me, "I developed a craze for conjuring when I was about sixteen. I differed from the rest only in that I had a naturally inventive mind, which I promptly turned to things magical. My father was a practical watchmaker and gunsmith, and I spent many hours in his workshop, ostensibly to learn his trade, though I am afraid I wasted much of my valuable time, and his equally valuable materials, in making little tricks with which to mystify my friends.

"One day whilst a schoolboy I went to the magical department of Hamley's, the famous toy dealers, to purchase a disappearing card trick which I had seen advertised. The gentleman who served me offered to demonstrate how the trick should be performed, but I replied, a little proudly perhaps, that I did not require any tuition. Amused at my self-assurance, he watched me perform the trick and then asked if I knew any more. I happened to have a little thing of my own invention, which consisted of making a coin apparently pass through the crown of a hat. I think he expected to see me do a sleight-of-hand trick that was as old as the hills. Instead, I surprised him by showing the coin apparently sticking half-way through the hat. He was completely baffled, and asked me where I had obtained the trick. I replied that I had made it myself. 'Can you make some more?' he asked. I told him that I could, whereupon he gave me an immediate order for ten pounds' worth.

THE PURSE TRICK, as performed by race-course swindlers. A warning to the simple-minded.

(1) "Here you are, gents, two genuine half-crowns. Watch me throw them in.



(2) "My right hand is quite empty—

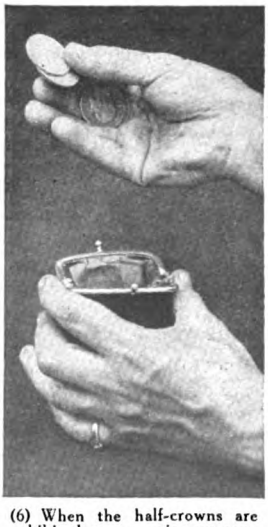
"I returned home firmly convinced that my fortune was made—and thus commenced my career as a manufacturer of magic. I learned afterwards that the gentleman who had given me the order was none other than the late William Hamley himself."

Once aroused, Mr. Bate's interest in magic never subsided. He read all the available books on the subject, attended the performances of well-known conjurers, and even made a first-hand study of the methods of the street-corner trickster.

Even as a youth he knew all there was to know about the "purse trick"—which leads us to another story.

"Once whilst I was in my father's shop at Maldon," he told me, "a particularly artful-looking customer entered and asked to see some rings. I recognized the man immediately as one I had seen performing the famous "purse trick" swindle at the local fair, and was therefore on my guard. Sure enough, after making some trifling purchase he tried to work the purse trick on me. After talking a lot of nonsense, he pulled from his pocket a small leather purse and two shining half-crowns. 'I will put these half-crowns into the purse—so,' he said, suiting the action to the word. 'Now, as you seem a smart lad, I will sell you this purse containing five shillings for half a crown.' I pretended to be profoundly impressed, but asked him to allow me to examine the purse first of all. He promptly emptied out the coins and handed me the purse, which I turned over and over with apparent curiosity, although, of course, I knew that there was no trick in its construction. Then, looking particularly innocent, I took two half-crowns from the till and apparently placed them in the purse as he had done. 'Now, you wouldn't trust *me* if I were to offer to sell you the purse, with its contents, for half a crown, would you?' I asked. 'Why, of course I would,' he replied. 'I saw you put the money in just a minute ago. Anyhow, you will not sell *me* the purse as it stands for half a crown, I'll wager.' So saying he took a half-crown out of his pocket and laid it upon the counter. 'Done!' I said, as I promptly pocketed the coin and handed him back his purse. I shall never forget the look of utter amazement on his face when he found the two coins inside the purse were pennies! 'All right, sonny, you've won,' he said. 'Next time I'm down this way I'll come to you for lessons.' With

HOW THE PURSE TRICK IS DONE.



(6) When the half-crowns are exhibited two pennies are concealed between the first and third fingers of the right hand.

(7) The half-crowns are apparently thrown into the purse, but, by a clever sleight, the two pennies are allowed to fall instead.

(8) In the action of closing the purse the half-crowns are slipped behind it.

(3) " And so is my left " (the performer carelessly tosses the purse from one hand to the other).

(4) " In fact, both hands are empty. Now, who will give me half a crown for the lot ? Thank you, sir."

(5) But the unfortunate purchaser finds, instead of two half-crowns, two pennies.

that he threw the purse on the floor and hurried out of the shop."

Mr. Bate is regarded as exceptionally expert in the purse trick, and has often been asked to demonstrate it in the presence of famous conjurers. The accompanying series of photographs, specially posed for this article, show exactly how it is done. A careful study of these, followed by a little practice, should enable readers to deceive their friends—legitimately, it is hoped !

" You must not run away with the idea that the so-called ' secret ' of a trick is the only thing that matters," Mr. Bate explained after he had demonstrated it to me. " The whole art of magic depends upon its presentation. I could show you innumerable tricks, mechanical and otherwise. You might be able to go straight away and deceive a few of your friends with some of them. But it would take you years of practice and study to attain the necessary proficiency to enable you to present the majority of them in public. Even then you would only be a copyist, without any sign of that originality which is essential to the true magician. Those who cherish the belief that ' how it is done ' is the most important factor in magic do a great injustice to the art of the illusionist. Whether the illusion that he presents is his own invention or not, the performer deserves far more credit than he is sometimes given for his skill in making what is often the simplest mechanical effect appear mysterious and supernatural."

For a few years Mr. Bate earned his living as a drawing-room conjurer, until an accident which resulted in a broken finger caused him to turn his attention solely to the manufacture of tricks.

The real turning-point in his career, however, was his first meeting with Mr. David Devant.

" When I was first introduced to Mr. Devant," he said, " I showed him a small illusion I had made, in which a handkerchief, previously vanished, was made to re-appear inside a sealed metal cylinder." (The details of the trick are fully explained in the accompanying photographs.) " He was so favourably impressed by this trick that he asked me if I could build him a really big illusion on similar lines. I thought the matter over, and soon hit upon an idea for producing a man under similar conditions, although the method itself was entirely different. Mr. Devant, with his showman's experience, immediately suggested that we should use a hollow barrel instead of a cylinder, and that the man produced should be dressed in the character of Diogenes. A further improvement upon the invention enabled us to have the sheets of paper at either end of the tub marked according to

(9) As the purse is thrown from hand to hand the half-crowns are thrown with it, under the purse. The clinking of the coins thus produced appears to come from inside the purse.

(10) When the purse is offered to a potential purchaser the coins are still held beneath the purse, being kept in position by the forefinger. At the last moment they are " palmed," and usually slipped into a secret pocket as the trickster casually carries his hand to grip the lapel of his coat.

THE "HANDKERCHIEF IN TUBE" TRICK.

(1) The first conjuring trick that Mr. Bate showed to David Devant, and from which the idea of "Diogenes" was evolved. The metal cylinder is first shown empty. Cigarette papers are fastened over either end by means of the rings.

instructions from members of the audience, in order to prove that there could be no substitution. As Mr. Devant has mentioned in an article he wrote for THE STRAND MAGAZINE some years ago, the illusion was a great success.

"Only once was there a slight mishap, when dear old Diogenes was late for his cue. In his hurry he mislaid his wig and beard, and was obliged to 'materialize' as a smooth-faced youth. I think that Mr. Devant was even more surprised than his audience!

(2) The conjurer shows that both ends of the tube are thus sealed.

"After this I continued to build all kinds of apparatus for Devant. His inventive brain was never at rest. No sooner had we finished one illusion than he would turn to me and ask: 'Well, Bate, what next? About time we did the Indian Rope Trick.' As you are probably aware, the trick to which he referred was one alleged to have been performed by Indian fakirs, in which a rope thrown into the air immediately became quite rigid, whereupon a boy climbed up it and vanished from sight. The trick had never been performed by any magician in this country, and was regarded as an utter impossibility, so that Mr. Devant's remarks were always taken as a joke.

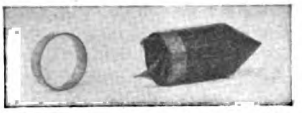
"However, one day, whilst at my bench, I had a sudden 'brain-wave,' and after a moment's thought I evolved a definite plan for reproducing the effect of the Indian Rope Trick! In a fever of excitement I threw down the work in hand and immediately commenced a model of my new invention. Within an hour it was complete, and, although crude in construction, it worked perfectly. You can imagine my delight when I realized that I had discovered a secret which had puzzled conjurers for many years. I had actually found a means of vanishing a human being in full view of the audience without employing any kind of covering. That evening I added a postscript to a letter I had already written to Mr. Devant, mentioning that I had hit upon an idea for the rope trick. He came straight down to Hove post-haste, bringing Mr. Maskelyne with him. I had intended that they should not see the illusion until I had built it on a large scale, so that a real man could be made to vanish, but they were so impatient to see what I had invented that I was obliged to show them the rough model. I took Mr. Maskelyne up to see it first. He made no comment beyond the remark that it was 'very good.' Mr. Devant, however, admitted himself momentarily baffled, and, despite his long experience of magic, he was obliged to make several guesses before he hit upon the solution of the mystery. A week later the full-sized apparatus was built, the illusion was duly produced, and I am pleased to say it was a great success.

"After this my *clientèle* developed very considerably, and on several occasions we had as many as half-a-dozen of the most famous conjurers in the house at the same time. In fact, they nicknamed it 'the conjurers' home.'

"When professional magicians get together it is a case of 'Greek meeting Greek,' for

(3) A moment later one end of the tube is broken open, and a coloured handkerchief, previously vanished, is found inside.

nothing delights them more than to mystify one another. There is, for example, a thumb-tie feat performed by De Biere, in which he catches hoops over his arms whilst his thumbs are firmly tied together. This has completely puzzled many of his fellow-magicians, including myself. There is, however, a simple variation upon the same idea which, if properly worked, is very good fun. I will show you how it is done.



(4) The secret apparatus by which the trick is performed. The handkerchief is previously packed into this projectile-shaped container, the end of which is sealed with a cigarette paper in the same manner as the cylinder.

"First of all you ask somebody to tie your thumbs together as tightly as possible. Then you hold them out in front of you and get him to cover your hands with a hat or a cap. Next you explain that you are going to demonstrate a highly-interesting experiment, and ask for two gentlemen to assist you. Standing sideways to the audience, you ask one of the volunteers to stand immediately in front of you and the other immediately behind you, so that you are in single file. Then, whilst you are discoursing upon the mystery you are about to present, the man in front of you suddenly feels a sharp tap on his ear. At this, you immediately turn round to the fellow behind and say: 'Look here, old man, don't play about! I want to do this trick properly, you know.' You resume your discourse, but a moment later the man in front gets another little bang on the ear. This can be repeated as long as your victims will allow, and if you are accused of striking the man yourself, you may ask anybody to remove the cap and see that your thumbs are still firmly tied. The onlookers, who have watched your movements, will be amazed as well as amused. Finally, you may vary the trick by catching hoops over your arms whilst your thumbs are still tied—or you can place one arm through the back of a chair, cause your thumbs to be tied, and then instantly make your escape.

(5) Whilst the conjuror is showing the cylinder to the audience (see photo 2) this "fake" is secretly palmed, and afterwards surreptitiously slipped into the cylinder. The cigarette paper broken by the sharp point of the container is, of course, replaced by the duplicate paper fitted to the container itself.

"Of course, the secret lies in the method by which the thumbs are tied" (which is clearly explained in the photographs on page 58). "I may add that De Biere's method is entirely different and, to me, quite unfathomable.

"Talking of escapes," Mr. Bate continued, "I will show you an original method of freeing yourself from handcuffs, which any amateur can employ with a little practice. As you may know, the commonest trick of the street-corner handcuff 'expert' is to secrete a piece of string inside the lock of the handcuffs, which is afterwards partly teased out by means of a hairpin, so that the protruding ends may be pulled with a sharp jerk, which forces the lock. The method I will show you, however, is less clumsy and infinitely more effective."

Mr. Bate then produced a pair of ordinary police handcuffs, which I clamped upon his wrists, and although he held his hands well away from his body to prove that he could not possibly obtain access to a secret "key," he escaped in less than a second. The effect was utterly baffling!

Mr. Bate kindly consented to disclose his secret for the benefit of readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE who may wish to mystify their friends. The photographs on page 59 explain the feat in detail.

For many years Mr. Bate joined forces with Mr. David Devant, both at St. George's Hall and on tour. Wherever they went, a room in the theatre was set aside as a workshop, and the master magician and the master mechanician were always putting their heads together to invent and build new illusions.

"Many of the best ideas for stage illusions," explained Mr. Bate, "have been the result of casual remarks. For example, one day an enthusiastic amateur obtained an introduction to Devant, and suggested that it would be a marvellous effect to vanish a real motor-cycle, complete with rider, and with the engine running. Devant agreed that it certainly would *if* it were practicable. No sooner had the young man

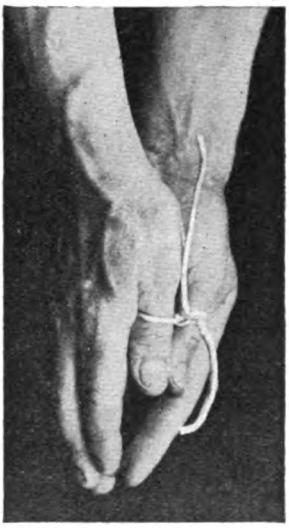
gone than I turned to 'the guv'nor,' as we called him, and announced that I had the germ of an idea for carrying out the illusion that had been suggested. He seized upon it immediately and we set to work together to build a model. The result was a show we called 'Biff!' in which a real motor-cycle was ridden on to the stage, up a plank, and into a large wooden crate. The crate was then hoisted into the air on pulleys, and the engine was still heard to be running. A light (called the D.D. rays) was flashed, the roar of the engine ceased in an instant, and the crate fell to pieces. The motor-cycle and rider had vanished!

"I shall never forget the *début* of this illusion. In order to make sure that everything should go smoothly, I decided that I would ride the motor-cycle myself. I had never ridden one before in my life, but one of the attendants showed me how to start it and stop it, and I imagined that this was all the knowledge I required for stage purposes. Unfortunately I had not taken into account the fact that the stage had a considerable 'rake' towards the footlights, and no sooner had I made my entrance on the motor-cycle than I found myself careering at what seemed a break-neck speed towards a stout gentleman in the front row of the stalls. I turned the handlebars just in time to avoid the footlights, and the machine tilted to an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. Round and round the stage I went, wobbling and swerving to avoid collision with the wings, and causing Mr. Devant to jump all over the place in fear of his life. Eventually, however, I managed to bring the machine to a standstill inside the crate, and the vanishing proceeded without mishap.

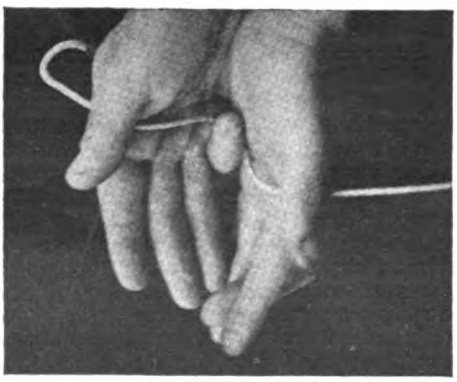
"We had another illusion in which Devant was supposed to produce a 'ghost,' and on the evening prior to the first performance he called me into his room to see the costume which the 'spook' had donned for dress rehearsal. It was made of some thin, filmy material, treated with phosphorescent paint, which gave it a weird, lustrous sheen. 'What do you think of it?' he asked. 'Splendid,' I replied; 'it is beautifully sheeny, isn't it?' Whereupon came a wailing voice from inside the ghost, 'Nah den, guv'nor,' it said, 'dere vas no need to be personal.' At first I was at a loss to understand his meaning, until the head-dress was removed, revealing a small, dark-haired youngster, obviously of the Jewish race.

"The performance of a magician entails a great deal of worry and mental strain lest anything should go wrong, and the ideal conjurer's assistant must be pre-

THE THUMB-TIE TRICK.



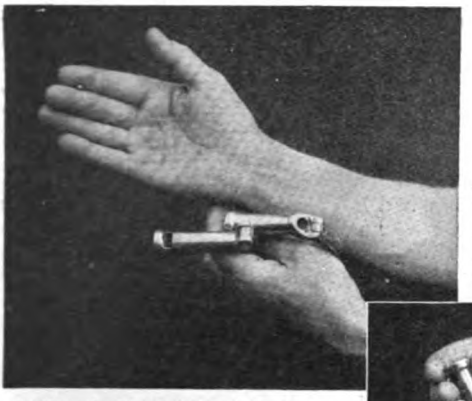
(1) The conjurer asks somebody to tie his thumbs as tightly as possible in this manner. He is then able to catch solid hoops over his arms and perform other remarkable feats although, apparently, his thumbs remain tied all the while.



(2) The secret of the thumb-tie trick. As he puts the thumbs together, the conjurer secretly bends the little finger of the right hand and grips the string. Then, no matter how tightly the knot may be made—

(3)—a fair-sized loop is left. This enables the performer to slip his thumb out, and in again, in a flash. On returning the thumb into the loop, a slight tautening of the string helps to preserve the illusion that the thumbs are still immovable.

A NEW HANDCUFF ESCAPE.



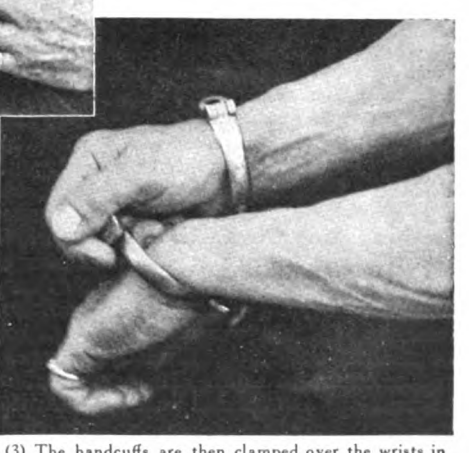
(1) How the handcuff escape is effected. A small steel ball (taken from a bicycle bearing) is secreted between the first and second fingers of each hand.

(2) Upon the handcuffs being returned to the performer after inspection, he secretly slips a ball into each of the locking recesses of the handcuffs. (This is exaggerated for the purposes of illustration, but may be done without arousing the slightest suspicion.)

pared to rise to any emergency. On one occasion Devant asked me to run down with him in his car to Knowsley Hall in order to assist at a performance he was to give before their Majesties the King and Queen. As I was leaving St. George's Hall I suddenly came to an abrupt standstill on the staircase, then retraced my steps to the workshop. There I slipped into my handbag a few strips of brass, together with one or two small tools, and hurried from the building to the car which was waiting outside. To this day I have not the faintest idea what induced me to turn back so suddenly and fetch my little repair outfit. You may call it sub-conscious mind, premonition, instinct, or what you will, but I assure you I had not the slightest reason for taking any tools with me, for I had previously overhauled all the apparatus, and knew that everything was in apple-pie order.

" I gave no further thought to the incident until about ten minutes before the performance was due to commence, when one of the stage hands came to me with a look of grave anxiety upon his face. It appeared that the model conservatory, in which Mr. Devant intended to ' grow ' some real roses for presentation to the Queen, had been badly broken through the carelessness of a scene-shifter. ' I don't know what the guv'nor will say when he hears of it ! ' exclaimed the stage hand, anxiously. ' Don't you dare to breathe a word to him about it ! ' I commanded, for I knew that the report of the accident might easily upset him for the entire performance. Then I suddenly thought of the bag I had brought. The conservatory was quickly carried outside, and I immediately set to work to try to repair the damage. To my delight the strips of brass saved the situation, and I managed to get the apparatus patched up and put back in its place exactly one minute before the curtain was due to rise. Long after the performance was over I told Mr. Devant what had occurred, and together we fervently blessed my little black bag.

" The famous box trick was the subject of an equally disconcerting incident. As you may remember, Mr. Devant used to allow an assistant to be locked inside a large box, which was afterwards securely bound with rope. In a few seconds the man would make



(3) The handcuffs are then clamped over the wrists in the ordinary way. Holding his hands well away from his body to prove that he does not obtain access to any secret " key," the performer grasps each handcuff in turn in the manner depicted, and a sharp pull brings it open. The ball will fall out between the first and second fingers, whence it may be disposed of at the first opportunity.

good his escape, although the fastenings and lashings were not tampered with in any way. Among the committee who were invited to come upon the stage from the audience to examine the box at every performance we noticed that one man seemed to be always in evidence. Night after night he came up and examined the box with the closest scrutiny, obviously determined to probe the secret of the trick if it took him several months. One evening, after the performance, Devant told me that he was afraid the gentleman in question was beginning to get very warm

upon the scent, and he suggested that we should be well advised to withdraw the box trick from our programme for a few weeks until his interest had subsided. 'Why not alter the method of working the effect?' I suggested. He jumped at the idea, and I immediately hurried home to my workshop and commenced to rebuild the box. I worked at it half-way through the night, and within twenty-four hours the illusion had been reconstructed on entirely new lines. I left the box at the theatre, together with a note asking Devant to see if he could discover the secret, and enclosing the 'key' to the mystery in a separate sealed envelope. He examined the apparatus for several hours in the hope of finding some sort of secret panel, but eventually had to admit himself beaten. Then he opened the envelope containing the solution of the problem, but this helped him no further, for the box was a mechanical paradox—it was impossible to escape from it until it had been securely fastened and roped.

"For several weeks the revised version of the box trick went remarkably well, until one evening the man who had to be imprisoned inside forgot the method by which he was enabled to escape. Perspiring with anxiety, Mr. Devant waited and waited for the man to make his reappearance, until the audience began to suspect that something was amiss. At last, in despair, Devant decided he would have to open the box in the ordinary way and pass over the failure of the illusion with as little fuss as possible. Upon the lid being raised, however, it was discovered that his distress at the failure of the illusion had caused the assistant to faint. He was lifted out unconscious and handed over to the care of a doctor, and the audience sympathetically accepted his indisposition as a complete excuse for the failure of the trick. Another assistant was introduced and the performance repeated—this time with absolute success.

"One of our famous magicians who was appearing at a large provincial hall had an illusion in which he produced various liquids from a bottle, but, not satisfied with the climax of this, asked me to make him a piece of apparatus which would enable him to conclude his performance by pouring several gallons of water from the same receptacle. I therefore fixed a large tank of water over the stage, from which a flexible metal tube ran down behind the back curtains. At the conclusion of his 'turn' the conjurer had merely to step to the back of the stage, where a hidden assistant secretly connected the piping to the back of his waistcoat, whence another tube ran under his armpit and down his sleeve to the bottle held in his hand. At rehearsals this worked very well, but on the first night of its production the tubing concealed beneath his clothing sprang a leak, and the audience were surprised to see enormous quantities of water saturating him right down to his feet, and pouring out of his boots. So that they should not see what had happened, the conjurer pretended that he had accidentally turned the bottle round the wrong way and spilled the contents over himself. The audience laughed uproariously, and the mishap was regarded as a really choice piece of comedy; but to repeat what the conjurer said to me when he came off would be prejudicial to public morals!

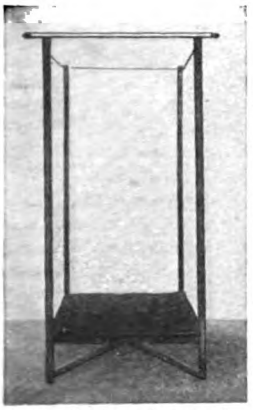
"One morning, later, whilst working in a room beneath the stage, I heard a loud report, and rushing upstairs found that a large model airship, which was one of the leading novelties of the week's programme, had burst and was on fire. The staff were well drilled for such an emergency as this, and in a very short time they had the conflagration in hand. One of the amateur firemen suddenly thought of the idea of utilizing the tank I had fixed above the stage as a means of playing on the flames from above. Unfortunately, I was immediately underneath him at the moment he turned on the water, and it poured down on me like a cataract. At that moment the conjurer for whom I had made the tank came in, and immediately he saw me he burst out laughing. That evening he presented me with a nicely bound copy of Shakespeare's works, on the wrapper of which he had written 'See page 349.' Upon this page he had marked two lines from 'Hamlet':—

'For 'tis sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard.'"

I asked Mr. Bate to explain how illusions are invented.

"The ideas for the effects themselves," he said, "arise from the most trivial incidents or from the most casual remarks. To decide what effect to produce, however, is much easier than to devise a means of producing it. The underlying principle of many illusions is this: the inventor first imagines all the possible solutions of the 'secret' that may arise in the minds of an average audience, and then tackles the problem from an entirely different angle. At the same time, if he can, so to speak, draw a red herring across the trail by making it appear that the effect is produced exactly as the onlooker supposes, so much the better. As a simple example, suppose a

A HOME-MADE "VANISHING LADY" ILLUSION.



(1) The bare framework of the "cabinet" is first offered for inspection.

(2) In full view of the audience the framework is draped with black curtains to form a kind of "tent."

conjurer can make his audience believe that a vanished coin has gone up his sleeve when he has merely 'palmed' it, the effect of the sleight is greatly enhanced by repeating it with his coat off.

"Some of the big illusions are based upon simple but little-known principles, whilst others are extremely complicated in their construction and difficult to present convincingly. Of course, from a practical point of view, the simpler the construction of an illusion the better, because it enables the apparatus to be examined minutely by members of the audience. I suppose you would not believe me if I told you that I could perform a 'disappearing lady' illusion in an ordinary drawing-room?"

"With apparatus that would bear inspection?" I asked.

Mr. Bate nodded.

"You shall see for yourself," he said.

A small wooden platform raised a few inches from the ground by four ordinary wooden legs was first placed in the centre of the room. Upon this a simple wooden framework was erected, which was draped with four dark curtains to form a kind of tent. The front curtain was suspended from curtain-rings so that it could be easily drawn. At Mr. Bate's invitation I examined the entire structure, but could find no suggestion of trickery in it. A young lady entered the room and stepped into the "tent."

"If desired," explained Mr. Bate, "a committee of two from the audience may be seated behind the tent during the performance. Now watch closely."

He then drew the front curtain, made a few passes with his hands, pulled the curtain open again, and the lady had vanished!

Mr. Bate invited me to take a peep behind the tent to see if I could discover where the lady had gone. There was no sign of her. I stepped round to the front again and watched closely whilst Mr. Bate drew the curtain once more. He made another pass with his hands, the curtain was opened, and the young lady stepped forward! Finally, I examined the entire apparatus once again, but failed to find any clue to the mystery.

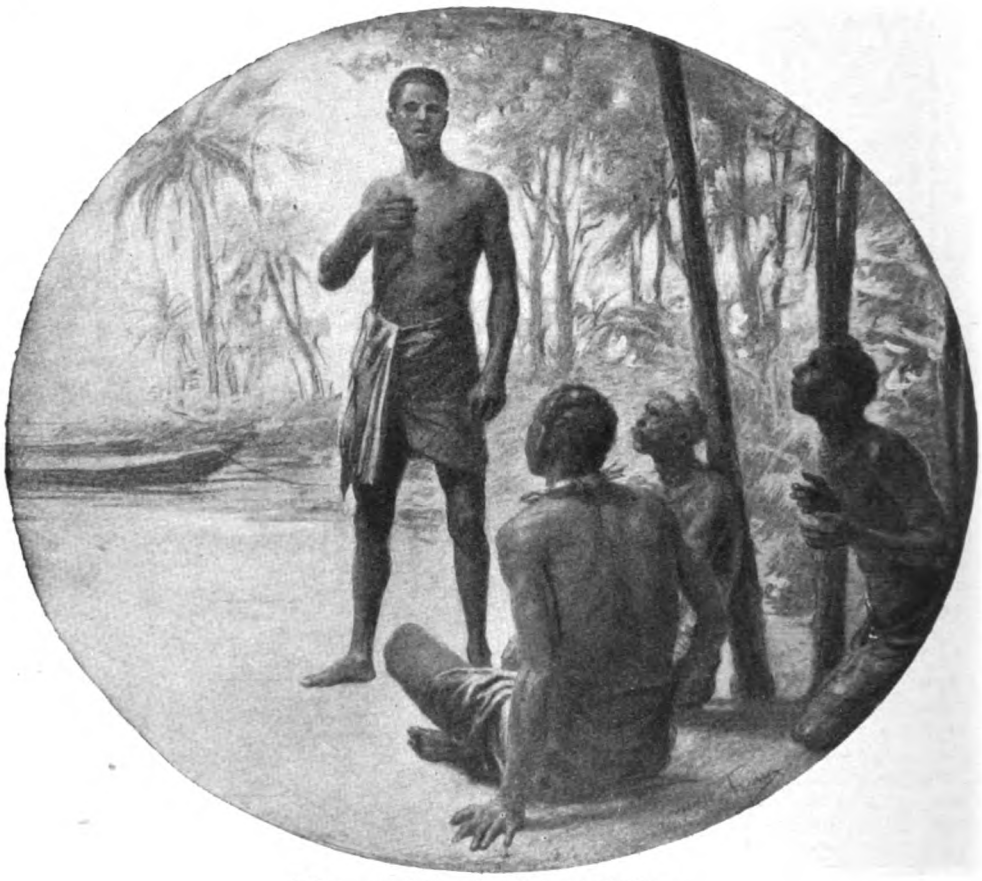
Mr. Bate kindly consented to the publication of the accompanying photographs in order to help amateur conjurers to build the illusion for themselves.

Can you guess how it is done?

(3) The lady steps into the cabinet. The front curtain is drawn, the conjurer makes a few passes, the curtain is pulled away—

(4) And the lady has vanished!

(*The complete explanation of this original illusion is given on page* 106.)



"But still, I found it," insisted Falea.

ONE DROP OF MOONSHINE

by

JOHN RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF

"WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS."

ILLUSTRATED BY UGO MATANIA

FALEA found it. But Tumaui paddled the canoe from which Falea found it. And Motui owned the canoe which Tumaui paddled when Falea found it. And old Mata was the respected father of Motui, the canoe-owner, and of Tumaui, the paddler, and of Falea, who found it. There you have the claims in the case and the basis for some very pretty litigation. The trouble was that in the island of Fufuti are no courts and no judges, and the only instrument known to ancient custom for the settlement of legal disputes is a club studded with sharks' teeth.

Tumaui, the giant, was naturally first to recall that primitive fact.

"Then I suppose we shall have to fight for it," he said, simply. "That is the quickest way. We can fight, and whoever is not killed can take the pearl."

They were resting in purple shadow under the low and broad-thatched eaves that made a sort of veranda to their rambling hut; the four of them—old Mata and his three sons. Outward lay the bright white crescent of Fufuti beach—a scythe eternally reaping the roll of the Pacific. Between the sharp tips of its headlands an endless harvest was gathered; torn up in great blue sheaves on the reef, laid over shoreward rank by rank, to fall in rushing windrows of foam. They dwelt on the edge of that silver blade. Its curve was their world; its chord, their horizon; the thunder of its mighty shearing, the common pulse of their lives.

And now all at once it had yielded its chief prize. From the coral caverns it guarded they had plucked this treasure—a talisman that straightway changed every outlook, pushed back every limit, and keyed their peaceful tenor to a strange and violent note.

"But still, I found it," insisted Falea.

He was the youngest, a sea-godling with skin the tint of a new-minted penny, with features as delicately chiselled as a shell, and wavy hair sun-crisped and scented in wild orange juice. He kept a little apart from the rest, and in the pout of his lip, like a petal of scarlet hibiscus, was bitterness, the bitterness of frustrate boyish hopes.

"But still, I did find it!" he repeated.

"You have said so ten-ten times," returned Tumaui. "And if you had found it ten-ten times over that would make no difference. It is just as much mine. Who took you to the fishing, pray, and tended the proa while you dived? Who laid out the oysters to rot? I will fight you, if you like, Falea—your claim against my claim."

But Motui chuckled.

"Our brother is anxious to begin the only argument he understands. We others would rather take counsel a little further. I have my own claim, Tumaui. I told you where that deep-water shell-bed lay. I sent you there. Attend me, now. If you force a fight the rest of us would certainly kill you. That would give us your claim to divide among us. One-fourth part—say, four thousand Chili dollars."

They turned with one impulse, and his smirk accepted the tribute. People had another name for Motui—"Sharp-Wit" they called him; the eldest, the smallest, and the most cunning of Mata's sons. How far his brethren trusted his quality might have been measured by Tumaui's darker frown, by the godling's uneasiness, and by the twinkling suspicion of old Mata himself. Nevertheless they did most strictly attend him.

"How do you know it would be four thousand?" demanded Mata, and Motui made a gesture plausible and confident.

"Many things are known to me. I have been away—out there. I have been to Raratonga, and to Fiji, and even to Townsville. And to the Paumotus, where they gather pearls in baskets. Who should know but I? Once at Papeete I saw a pearl. It was a size smaller than this of ours. Yes; it was the next small size. But the fat French pearl buyer gave sixteen thousand Chili dollars for it," he added.

He did not use a native word for thousands; there is no such word in Fufuti speech. But they were all more or less familiar with pidgin-French symbols of trade. They had the same perception of gigantic wealth, found the same fascination in an actual figure. Hungrily, every eye sought the object again where it lay on the mat beside them, nested in an unrolled wisp of coco-nut fibre.

IT was an amazing pearl, such a one as comes to light now and then from Coromandel or Ceylon, from Thursday Island or the Low Archipelago, to shake the market and set the collectors of the world distracted. Not alone by its size—the equal of a robin's egg, but this was flawless, uniform in grain and colouring, singly and marvellously perfect, fit to adorn the bosom of Selene, with no more than the merest luminous thought of a blush upon it, like that the pallid goddess betrayed, perhaps, the time she spied the young Endymion.

So it might have seemed to some wandering beachcomber—who, as Tusitala of beloved memory tells us, is often poor relation to the poet—if he had chanced to spy it there.

To others of sober turn it might have been rather a sinister thing, for it was lovelier and far more precious than many a gem for which feuds have been fought and life, honour, and tears freely spilled; for which crowns and courtesans have been famed and have earned ill-fame; a deadly concentrate of lust, greed, and envy; a fateful corrosive on the minds of men.

To these dwellers by Fufuti beach—children of the sun, child-eyed and child-hearted survivors in the last, last remnant of an earthly paradise—it meant matters much simpler.

"Sixteen thousand Chili," remarked Mata, "would buy a real white man's house with a tin roof, and pigs and tobacco! Also, maybe, a new shot-gun which we need so

badly," he added, nodding toward the ancient, rusted fowling-piece on the wall.

It lay before them as yet unstoried; virgin; vastly potential. And each of the others understood Mata's covetous thrill in reading out its destiny, and each did the same for himself, with his own secret amendments, until, while they stared tense and eager, suddenly the dangerous silence was ended by a little quaver of merriment and the pearl itself flashed—presto!—with an effect of magic.

Startled, they saw it caught in slim brown fingers. And then presently they relaxed again. For the clever bit of sleight had been performed by the fifth member of their household, whom they had forgotten, whom they often did forget, so quiet she would keep for hours—Lele, the cripple girl.

SHE sat propped upon her low bedstead, a trundle-bed, in fact, a battered relic of Fufuti's only missionary establishment (lately dispersed) and Lele's own personal and unlucky inheritance. She had leaned from that couch to whip away the strip of coco-nut fibre and neatly possess herself of their prize. Now she rolled it and tossed it like a toy and held it up before the light to show its wan splendour.

"Pretty—it is pretty!" she cried. "But it is sad, too," she added softly to herself. "See how pale and sad. Like moonshine, Like a drop of moonshine!"

She made them smile. Even dark Tumaui and sulky Falea smiled at her whimsey. It was hard not to laugh with Lele, whenever Lele still chose to laugh.

There had been a time of plenteous laughter, of little else but laughter; a time when no other maid in the island could match her spendthrift spirit of youth and health. No other had been so apt to run and to play; to chase the rainbow fish a fathom deep through the blued champagne of the lagoon, to ride the roaring surf like a sky-tossed bubble, to dance like a wind-tormented leaf of the passion-vine until her lithe and strong young body seemed to melt in the rhythm of the chant.

Aye, she had laughed in those times. And she had sung. And she had had a way of calling folk and things and life itself by all manner of sharp or endearing little names—the way of a bird. And for the rest she had flirted—delightfully. Outrageously. With the entire male population; with Mata's three sons in particular. Until the question of her ultimate marriage, and her proper suppression in marriage, had become not so much a public topic as a public issue.

But a day had ended all that. The day, long to be remembered with mingled awe and humour by the easy-going islanders, when the mission of the late Rev. Dinwiddie fell, and great was the fall thereof.

It fell, quite literally, in the first hurricane of its first season; for the Reverend D. neglected to found himself on a rock, and the collapse of all his dreams of an orthodox, converted, flannel-shirted, hymn-singing Fufuti was equally complete with the wreck of beam and roof-tree, of corrugated iron slabs and imported worsted texts that strewed its beach. Nobody would have complained much, perhaps, except the reverend himself—nobody else would greatly have bemoaned that obvious rude jest of the old rude gods—if Lele had not happened to be an accidental sacrifice. Lele, the untamed creature marked for a first convert, who was somehow caught in the disaster, pinned down by a settling wall, crushed and maimed for life.

Since then she had come to live with Mata, her half-uncle and the only relative who could find a place for her. She came with her trundle-bed—and in truth she did wonders; kept the house and the hearth, took direction of the two aged cooking-women, wove and sewed and braided sennit, and meanwhile contrived never to be seen off the couch where she reigned. It was her courage and her pride still to reign, an apparent queen; to be freshly garbed and combed and beflowered, with chains of shells and bright berries on her breast, with clusters of starry stephanotis in her glorious hair, to deck her beauty as before. Even though it meant nothing.

For it could mean nothing now to any man.

The three sons of Mata were kind. They were indulgent. They accepted her in fraternal harmony. Never again could she flutter them. Never again in their eyes, nor in any eyes, would she see the quick flame of jealousy and desire for Lele, a cripple girl.

Perhaps that fact like a fixed shadow had deepened her vision in unexpected ways; perhaps that wild young heart, bereft of youth, had gained an understanding and a tenderness of them in their peaceful, contented life together such as they never suspected. She was watching them anxiously from under lowered lashes while she played so lightly with the pearl.

"And yet of itself it is only an old oyster egg," she ventured, at last.

"Oyster egg?" echoed Motui, shocked. "A fine thing to call it! Have you no sense, girl?"

This time they did not smile. The superior male warned her of a limit. They had gone too far toward actual tragedy in this business.

"It is the most wonderful find ever was made on Fufuti," explained Motui. "It is

the happiest fortune that could come to us!"

Lele took the pearl in her hollowed hands, and held it out before them over her knee like a ball of cold fire in a cup, and so presided quite naturally as stake-holder and umpire.

"It has not made anyone very happy yet," she observed. "You still want to fight, Tumaui? Come—tell your plan, and what you would do if you won."

"Hoo!" said Tumaui in his big chest. "I would buy a fast schooner, like white men have, with a brass devil-devil to make it go without wind."

"All for yourself?" asked Lele.

"Of course!"

"You would be happy then?"

"Of course!"

"And Mata—what do you say?"

"I say, let us draw lots," returned the old man, sturdily. "It is fair. We put many small pebbles in a bag and draw one by one. He who gets the last pebble gets the pearl."

"For himself?"

"Yes."

"To buy pigs and shot-guns?"

"Yes!"

"That would make you happy?"

"Yes—yes!" nodded Mata.

"And you, Motui?"

Motui was ready. Trust Motui to be ready with a scheme. What they needed to settle the whole difficulty, Motui said, was an able salesman. If they waited for the regular trader to come around next month he would be sure to cheat them. On the other hand, if they should delegate one of their own number to visit the far markets—a man skilful, deep, and wise—doubtless he would get much more than sixteen thousand; would return triumphant, a sack of silver in either fist, with enough to satisfy everybody!

"I would ask no pay for my trouble," concluded the cunning Motui, modestly.

"Oh-ho!" said Lele. "You are that man?"

"I am the right man."

"To take the pearl away, yourself, among the white people—you would be happy?"

Motui admitted nothing would make him happier, and Lele came to the youngest son.

"Falea, it is your turn."

Throughout the session Falea had remained mostly a fretful auditor. He still kept to one side of the others. His grievance was heavier than theirs—as his years were lighter—and would allow no compromise, it seemed. For abruptly, at Lele's appeal, he kicked the balance sky-high.

"No! I will not have a turn. I will not join to be talked out of it. Thieves!" he cried, as he sprang to his feet.

IT was the snapping of their tension. Stealthily, Motui loosed a knife in his belt. Tumaui rose like a thunder-cloud.

"Who is a thief?"

"You—each of you!" declared Falea. "If I pick a coco-nut, is it mine? If I find a pearl—can anyone take it from me without stealing? Or any part of it?" he added, shouting them down.

A very handsome copper-bronze godling he looked.

"A part of a pearl is no good to me. The pearl itself is the charm—and with it I would be a king! I could go anywhere and have anything," he yearned. "I could see the white men's ports and ride their ships, and white men would wait on me. I could have a pink silk shirt, such as the trader wears; and a gold chain, and rings, and shoes—big yellow shoes. I could have a music-box and bottles of scent and sweet-scented oil, and neckties and a jew's-harp, and a watch with a bell in it, and a green umbrella. and three kinds of tinned meat for breakfast!"

At every lyric fling he had sidled a little nearer to Lele's couch, while the others drew together in common cause, intent and furious.

"You think you can get them?" Tumaui was bawling. "Fool!"

"I can try!" said Falea, and with the word, being near enough, made a desperate snatch. And they came huddling after and snatched to prevent him. And like him they snatched—the air.

Lele was still presiding. So far as they could see, she had not budged. She still held her hands out idly over her knee. But her hands were empty. With a graceful little gesture she showed how entirely empty, and smiled up ever so slightly at their stricken faces. But by magic, or by sleight—the pearl was gone!

It was gone, and the purple shadows seemed to darken about them as they stared and stammered.

"That drop of moonshine?" she answered, sweetly. "Oh, it is put away. It is safe. I have decided to keep it for myself."

They gave a four-fold gasp.

"Yes," she said. "Why not? It is the nature of this treasure that everyone wants it for himself alone. I do not notice that any of you thought of me, of Lele.

"*I* long for things, too. *I* would like to be happy, too. Greatly I would like it. I know little of white men or of white men's customs—and what I have learned has not made me very happy." (They should have winced at that.) "But you all believe the white men can sell you some wonderful happiness for your pearl. Very well! I

"Very well. I go. But mind, if you favour any rival to me—look out!"

shall keep it until the trader comes, to buy some happiness of my own."

She paused, and of a sudden her glance unveiled, the prisoned soul flamed out at them like a steel blade from a scabbard.

"Unless—you mean to search, to drag and trample me. Do, and I scream for the neighbours, and the pearl you never see again. Never—never, I promise. Not though you kill me. Now, go on," she cried. "Go on and search a poor cripple girl!"

As a matter of fact, with their racial handicap at such ungentle business, they hardly knew how to begin. The pearl was hidden. So small a thing she might have concealed anywhere roundabout. Bewildered, angry, and distrustful—vainly seeking to meet that inexpugnable feminine

injustice to man which men have sought in vain to meet—they edged off into the open and stood for a time with their heads together.

Meanwhile, Lele stayed alone under the deep-thatched eaves. She sank back until she leaned against the wall of the hut, an exhausted and very limp little peacemaker.

She roused from that reverie to find Tumaui standing alone before her on the mat.

"Lele!" he began, brusquely. He was under some difficulty in speaking; the whole pose and port of that brawny giant had been curiously schooled. "Lele, I have not many words," he said. "Only these. You are very sure of yourself, Lele. But you cannot shift alone. You will need protection. I am a strong protector. We would get on very well together—you and I."

She sat up in slow amazement, almost in terror, her fingers spread upon her breast.

"What—what are you trying to say?"

"Will you marry me, Lele?" he blurted.

She gazed incredulous, transfixed.

"Oh—oh—oh!" she breathed, and then with an effort, "I—I cannot tell. I will think of it. Go away, Tumaui."

Like one who discards an irksome part, Tumaui seemed to fill out again, so that he bulked over her.

"Very well. I go. But mind, I will not be beaten. If you favour any rival to me—look out! I twist his throat"—his great naked arms knotted—"like the string of an orange! Remember!"

He departed, and she was once more alone with her throbbing heart; alone, until there crept in under the eaves—her highly respected half-uncle, old Mata himself.

"Lele!" he began. As a man of domestic experience he did this sort of thing rather better; his brown face, wrinkled like a nut, showed nothing but benevolence. "Oh, Lele, what a very able girl you are! But you cannot manage by yourself. You will need a position to maintain you, Lele. I am a high-chief, and if I choose to take another wife she will have authority. We would get on very well together, you and I."

"What—what is the talk?"

"I am asking you in marriage, Lele."

She lowered her face in her hands.

"I must think. Go away, Mata."

"Very well," said the old gentleman, crestfallen. "I go. But I do not advise you to listen to any other proposals, my dear. These sons of mine are lively fellows. Nobody could keep them in order for you, save only me. Remember that!"

She never knew how long it was before another voice murmured in her ear—a smooth and luring voice this time.

"Lele—oh, Lele!" it began, and she looked up at Motui and his smirk. "Greatly I admire you, Lele. You are a very clever girl. Too clever not to make the most of your chance when I tell you—when I tell you that you need not *always* be a cripple, Lele. I know where you can be cured! We can go to that place together, you and I."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"There is a schooner leaving our harbour to-morrow for Fiji, and at Fiji is a hospital where the great white medicine doctors work their wonderful cures. Will you not be glad to be free again? Will you not rejoice to sport and to run as you used? Then come with me to Fiji!"

She swayed on her couch.

"Only marry me, Lele, and I will have you carried aboard to-night!"

Somehow, suffocated though she was, she found the force to wave him away.

"Very well," he said, spitefully. "I go. But no one can make you any better offer, Lele. No one else could give you such happiness. Mark what I say!"

YET that was not to be her last trial. That was not to be the top-note plucked upon her tautened soul. For while she lay, poignantly there stole a breath of wild orange, and speech as soft as the music of a wind-harp caressed her. Falea knelt by her side.

"Lele—oh, Lele! What a brave spirit is yours! How brave you are, Lele!" he whispered. "But do not think to live without love. Great is my love for you, Lele. Let us go far off together, you and I."

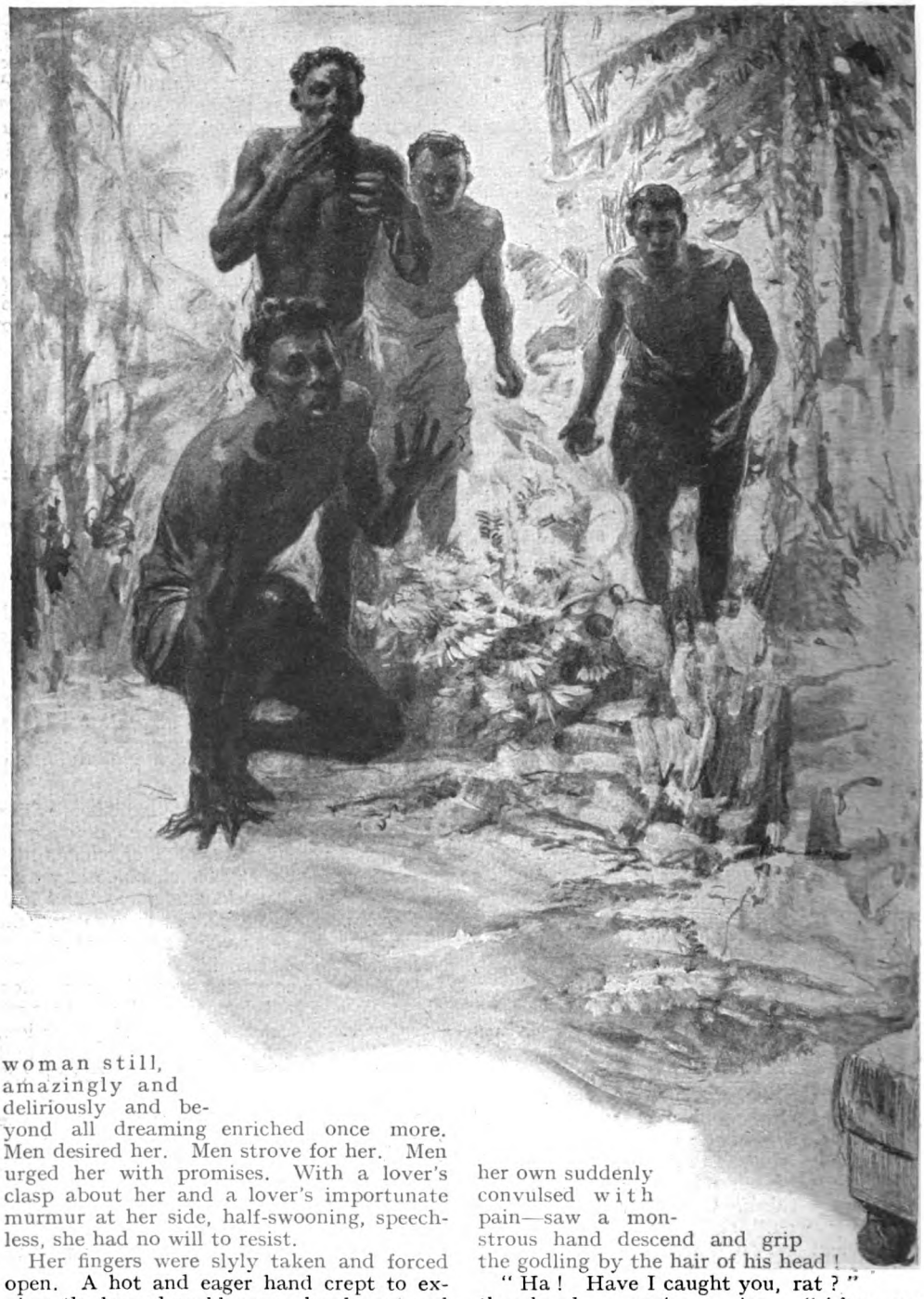
Long and long it seemed since any man had spoken to her like that; long and long it was to have been before ever a man spoke to her so again—never in this world.

"Let us wed, Lele!"

With words as sweet as song he wooed her, the way she had been wooed in the time of her strength and beauty and perfection, when, as a sea nymph, she had sung and danced along the strand and tasted the savour of life.

"Oh, Lele, you are like the flower in the cool shade! You are like the dew in the moss! Come with me! My canoe lies at the lagoon. I will carry you in my arms, and we will go away to some far island where none can find us. There we will be merry all day, and I will keep you and never let you go for great love, Lele!"

An arm came stealing and drawing her close till she fluttered like a netted bird. And in her own heart dwelt a traitor to subdue her; in her own veins beat an answering pulse. She had been a woman, cruelly robbed and deprived. She was a



woman still, amazingly and deliriously and beyond all dreaming enriched once more. Men desired her. Men strove for her. Men urged her with promises. With a lover's clasp about her and a lover's importunate murmur at her side, half-swooning, speechless, she had no will to resist.

Her fingers were slyly taken and forced open. A hot and eager hand crept to explore the looped necklaces on her breast and the mats and coverings about her. And she yielded. She was yielding. She was on the very point of yielding when, through misted eyes, she saw the young face so near her own suddenly convulsed with pain—saw a monstrous hand descend and grip the godling by the hair of his head!

"Ha! Have I caught you, rat?" thundered a raging voice. "After we agreed none should start searching for himself!"

Tumaui it was! Tumaui, who had stalked to nab Falea unawares. And while

"I still have it," said Lele. She held the pearl up before them to show its loveliness.

they fought, the other two came running from opposite corners of the hut.

"Hold him! Did he get the pearl?" cried Mata, and flung himself into the fray.

"Hold them both! One of them has the pearl!" chattered Motui, as he followed.

"Thieves!" sobbed Falea, half-strangled. "In another minute I would have won the pearl!"

"Come on then, all of you!" roared Tumaui. "Everybody in! This is the time to decide. I fight you all—so—and so—and so! Ho-ho! And the best one shall take the pearl!"

With a blow of his fist he sent Motui's knife spinning like a silver flying-fish. Falea he thrust down between his knees and gathered Motui in his arms to crush him; and so he might have done had not Mata hung like a slug at his mighty neck.

For a wink the forces balanced; they stayed in statued fury, a tangle of writhing limbs.

"STOP—stop, or I fire!"

The cry reached them through the heat of battle. It was the sort of cry to make them heed, and vaguely at first, and then in speedily-petrified astonishment, they were appraised of Lele. Sitting propped on her couch as before, as always, presiding. And presiding this time with a vengeance. Across her knee she held the rusty family fowling-piece which she had snatched from its nail on the wall behind.

"Stop!" she insisted; and they were anxious so to do. "Stand off!" she warned; and so they did.

"Be careful—it is loaded!" shrilled Mata.

For answer she cocked the weapon deliberately and covered them at point-blank range with its single eye of some ancient, huge calibre. It was a famous institution, that Mata family gun, the only one on the island. Many years had they kept it in deserved respect, and they flinched before its probing, merciless stare. And over it, and with its aid, she probed them as well.

At that instant was given her a final opportunity to read passion and jealousy and thwarted desire in the faces of her suitors—for the sake of Lele, a cripple girl.

"Wicked men!" She passed them in slow review. "Oh, wicked—wicked men!" she said, still shaken with the storm that had swept her so that the necklaces clicked on her heaving bosom. "Liars, every one! It was only the pearl you wanted!"

Their sullen eyes sought the ground, but presently Mata spoke their thought.

"For all that, you will have to choose among us, Lele. You will have to settle this. Pick someone, and give him the gun to defend himself, and you, and the pearl—if you still have the pearl—if you still have the pearl. Buy your own happiness as you will!"

"Yes—yes," they chorused. "Choose!"

"Very well," said Lele, after a pause. "I still have it." Without relinquishing the gun, she made a little flashing gesture of her free hand, and somehow, from somewhere—presto!—the treasure appeared again. She held it up before them to show its loveliness; the wondrous soft radiance of that fateful toy that seemed to light all the shadows. "And I will choose," she added.

"I do not marvel any more why it should be so sad. I know. Because it is so wicked. It made you wicked—Tumaui! Motui! Falea! Mata! Me it made wicked, also. And see how sad we are! Where are peace and content such as we used to know? Where are the trust and affection and loving kindness that bound us?"

They hung their heads before her.

"Now do I remember," she went on, in a kind of mournful exaltation, "now do I remember the wisdom of the white man! At the missionary's chapel I learned it, and indeed I have paid for it with the life and the hope out of my own body: '*The lust of riches is the seed of evil,*'" she quoted, with the full throat of knowledge and of suffering.

"So they say. So their Book has taught. So they must believe. And it is true! See how this evil seed has grown temptations and selfishness and wickedness in our hearts. Wherever it might go it would grow the same fruit. And so," she said, brooding upon them, yearning over them with great, tender, understanding eyes—child-like and still unfathomable—"and so, if it be mine to buy happiness with, let me buy for you and for the white men, too, by their own wisdom. If I must choose my happiness, let it be what it was and will be for ever——"

Swift as conjuring she slipped that glorious pearl into the muzzle of the gun, and aiming well over their heads toward the foaming reefs, while they covered their ears in dismay and awe—fired.

"Only moonshine, after all!"

THE EXIT OF BATTLING BILLSON

by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THE Theatre Royal, Llunindnno, is in the middle of the principal thoroughfare of that repellent town, and immediately opposite its grubby main entrance there is a lamp-post. Under this lamp-post, as I approached, a man was standing. He was a large man, and his air was that of one who has recently passed through some trying experience. There was dust on his person, and he had lost his hat. At the sound of my footsteps he turned, and the rays of the lamp revealed the familiar features of my old friend Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge.

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated. "What are you doing here?"

There was no possibility of hallucination. It was the man himself in the flesh. And what Ukridge, a free agent, could be doing in Llunindnno was more than I could imagine. Situated, as its name implies, in Wales, it is a dark, dingy, dishevelled spot, inhabited by tough and sinister men with suspicious eyes and three-day beards; and to me, after a mere forty minutes' sojourn in the place, it was incredible that anyone should be there except on compulsion.

Ukridge gaped at me incredulously.

"Corky, old horse!" he said, "this is, upon my Sam, without exception the most amazing event in the world's history. The last bloke I expected to see."

"Same here. Is anything the matter?" I asked, eyeing his bedraggled appearance.

"Matter? I should say something was the matter!" snorted Ukridge, astonishment giving way to righteous indignation. "They chucked me out!"

"Chucked you out? Who? Where from?"

"This infernal theatre, laddie. After taking my good money, dash it! At least, I got in on my face, but that has nothing to do with the principle of the thing. Corky, my boy, don't you ever go about this world seeking for justice, because there's no such thing under the broad vault of heaven. I had just gone out for a breather after the first act, and when I came back I found some fiend in human shape had pinched my seat. And just because I tried to lift the fellow out by the ears, a dozen hired assassins swooped down and shot me out. Me, I'll trouble you! The injured party! Upon my Sam," he said, heatedly, with a longing look at the closed door, "I've a dashed good mind to——"

"I shouldn't," I said, soothingly. "After all, what does it matter? It's just one of those things that are bound to happen from time to time. The man of affairs passes them off with a light laugh."

"Yes, but——"

"Come and have a drink."

The suggestion made him waver. The light of battle died down in his eyes. He stood for a moment in thought.

"You wouldn't bung a brick through the window?" he queried, doubtfully.

"No, no!"

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

"Perhaps you're right."

He linked his arm in mine and we crossed the road to where the lights of a public-house shone like heartening beacons. The crisis was over.

"Corky," said Ukridge, warily laying down his mug of beer on the counter a few moments later, lest emotion should cause him to spill any of its precious contents, "I can't get over, I simply cannot get over the astounding fact of your being in this blighted town."

I explained my position. My presence in Llunindnno was due to the fact that the paper which occasionally made use of my services as a special writer had sent me to compose a fuller and more scholarly report than its local correspondent seemed capable of concocting of the activities of one Evan Jones, the latest of those revivalists who periodically convulse the emotions of the Welsh mining population. His last and biggest meeting was to take place next morning at eleven o'clock.

"But what are you doing here?" I asked.

"What am *I* doing here?" said Ukridge. "Who, me? Why, where else would you expect me to be? Haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?"

"Haven't you seen the posters?"

"What posters? I only arrived an hour ago."

"My dear old horse! Then naturally you aren't abreast of local affairs." He drained his mug, breathed contentedly, and led me out into the street. "Look!"

He was pointing at a poster, boldly lettered in red and black, which decorated the side-wall of the Bon Ton Millinery Emporium. The street-lighting system of Llunindnno is defective, but I was able to read what it said:—

ODDFELLOWS' HALL.

Special Ten-Round Contest.

LLOYD THOMAS

(Llunindnno)

vs.

BATTLING BILLSON

(Bermondsey).

"Comes off to-morrow night," said Ukridge. "And I don't mind telling you, laddie, that I expect to make a colossal fortune."

"Are you still managing the Battler?" I said, surprised at this dogged perseverance. "I should have thought that after your last two experiences you would have had about enough of it."

"Oh, he means business this time! I've been talking to him like a father."

"How much does he get?"

"Twenty quid."

"Twenty quid? Well, where does the colossal fortune come in? Your share will only be a tenner."

"No, my boy. You haven't got on to my devilish shrewdness. I'm not in on the purse at all this time. I'm the management."

"The management?"

"Well, part of it. You remember Isaac O'Brien, the bookie I was partner with till that chump Looney Coote smashed the business? Izzy Previn is his real name. We've gone shares in this thing. Izzy came down a week ago, hired the hall, and looked after the advertising and so on; and I arrived with good old Billson this afternoon. We're giving him twenty quid, and the other fellow's getting another twenty; and all the rest of the cash Izzy and I split on a fifty-fifty basis. Affluence, laddie! That's what it means. Affluence beyond the dreams of a Monte Cristo. Owing to this Jones fellow the place is crowded, and every sportsman for miles around will be there to-morrow at five bob a head, cheaper seats two-and-six, and standing-room one shilling. Add lemonade and fried fish privileges, and you have a proposition almost without parallel in the annals of commerce. I couldn't be more on velvet if they gave me a sack and a shovel and let me loose in the Mint."

I congratulated him in suitable terms.

"How is the Battler?" I asked.

"Trained to an ounce. Come and see him to-morrow morning."

"I can't come in the morning. I've got to go to this Jones meeting."

"Oh, yes. Well, make it early in the afternoon, then. Don't come later than three, because he will be resting. We're at Number Seven, Caerleon Street. Ask for the Cap and Feathers public-house, and turn sharp to the left."

I WAS in a curiously uplifted mood on the following afternoon as I set out to pay my respects to Mr. Billson. This was the first time I had had occasion to attend one of these revival meetings, and the effect it had had on me was to make me feel as if I had been imbibing large quantities of champagne to the accompaniment of a very loud orchestra. Even before the revivalist rose to speak, the proceedings had had an effervescent quality singularly unsettling to the sober mind, for the vast gathering had begun to sing hymns directly they took their seats; and while the opinion I had formed of the inhabitants of Llunindnno was not high, there was no denying their vocal powers. There is something about a Welsh voice when raised in song that no other voice seems to possess—a creepy, heart-

searching quality that gets right into a man's inner consciousness and stirs it up with a pole. And on top of this had come Evan Jones's address.

It did not take me long to understand why this man had gone through the countryside like a flame. He had magnetism, intense earnestness, and the voice of a prophet crying in the wilderness. His fiery eyes seemed to single out each individual in the hall, and every time he paused sighings and wailings went up like the smoke of a furnace. And then, after speaking for what I discovered with amazement on consulting my watch was considerably over an hour, he stopped. And I blinked like an aroused somnambulist, shook myself to make sure I was still there, and came away. And now, as I walked in search of the Cap and Feathers, I was, as I say, oddly exhilarated: and I was strolling along in a sort of trance when a sudden uproar jerked me from my thoughts. I looked about me, and saw the sign of the Cap and Feathers suspended over a building across the street.

It was a dubious-looking hostelry in a dubious neighbourhood: and the sounds proceeding from its interior were not reassuring to a peace-loving pedestrian. There was a good deal of shouting going on and much smashing of glass; and, as I stood there, the door flew open and a familiar figure emerged rather hastily. A moment later there appeared in the doorway a woman.

She was a small woman, but she carried the largest and most intimidating mop I had ever seen. It dripped dirty water as she brandished it; and the man, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder, proceeded rapidly on his way.

"Hullo, Mr. Billson!" I said, as he shot by me.

IT was not, perhaps, the best-chosen moment for endeavouring to engage him in light conversation. He showed no disposition whatever to linger. He vanished round the corner, and the woman, with a few winged words, gave her mop a victorious flourish and re-entered the public-house. I walked on, and a little later a huge figure stepped cautiously out of an alleyway and fell into step at my side.

"Didn't recognize you, mister," said Mr. Billson, apologetically.

"You seemed in rather a hurry," I agreed.

"R!" said Mr. Billson, and a thoughtful silence descended upon him for a space.

"Who," I asked, tactlessly, perhaps, "was your lady friend?"

Mr. Billson looked a trifle sheepish. Unnecessarily, in my opinion. Even heroes may legitimately quail before a mop wielded by an angry woman.

"She come out of a back room," he said, with embarrassment. "Started makin' a fuss when she saw what I'd done. So I come away. You can't dot a woman," argued Mr. Billson, chivalrously.

"Certainly not," I agreed. "But what was the trouble?"

"I been doin' good," said Mr. Billson, virtuously.

"Doing good?"

"Spillin' their beers."

"Whose beers?"

"All of their beers. I went in and there was a lot of sinful fellers drinkin' beers. So I spilled 'em. All of 'em. Walked round and spilled all of them beers, one after the other. Not 'arf surprised them pore sinners wasn't," said Mr. Billson, with what sounded to me not unlike a worldly chuckle.

"I can readily imagine it."

"Huh?"

"I say I bet they were."

"R!" said Mr. Billson. He frowned. "Beer," he proceeded, with cold austerity, "ain't right. Sinful, that's what beer is. It stingeth like a serpent and biteth like a ruddy adder."

My mouth watered a little. Beer like that was what I had been scouring the country for for years. I thought it imprudent, however, to say so. For some reason which I could not fathom, my companion, once as fond of his half-pint as the next man, seemed to have conceived a puritanical hostility to the beverage. I decided to change the subject.

"I'm looking forward to seeing you fight to-night," I said.

He eyed me woodenly

"Me?"

"Yes. At the Oddfellows' Hall, you know."

He shook his head.

"I ain't fighting at no Oddfellows' Hall," he replied. "Not at no Oddfellows' Hall nor nowhere else I'm not fighting, not to-night nor no night." He pondered stolidly, and then, as if coming to the conclusion that his last sentence could be improved by the addition of a negative, added "No!"

And having said this, he suddenly stopped and stiffened like a pointing dog; and, looking up to see what interesting object by the wayside had attracted his notice, I perceived that we were standing beneath another public-house sign, that of the Blue Boar. Its windows were hospitably open, and through them came a musical clinking of glasses. Mr. Billson licked his lips with a quiet relish.

"'Scuse me, mister," he said, and left me abruptly.

MY one thought now was to reach Ukridge as quickly as possible, in order to acquaint him with these sinister developments. For I was startled. More, I was alarmed and uneasy. In one of the star performers at a special ten-round contest, scheduled to take place that evening, Mr. Billson's attitude seemed to me peculiar, not to say disquieting. So, even though a sudden crash and uproar from the interior of the Blue Boar called invitingly to me to linger, I hurried on, and neither stopped, looked, nor listened until I stood on the steps of Number Seven, Caerleon Street. And eventually, after my prolonged ringing and knocking had finally induced a female of advanced years to come up and open the door, I found Ukridge lying on a horse-hair sofa in the far corner of the sitting-room.

I unloaded my grave news. It was wasting time to try to break it gently.

"I've just seen Billson," I said, "and he seems to be in rather a strange mood. In fact, I'm sorry to say, old man, he rather gave me the impression——"

"That he wasn't going to fight to-night?" said Ukridge, with a strange calm. "Quite correct. He isn't. He's just been in here to tell me so. What I like about the man is his consideration for all concerned. *He* doesn't want to upset anybody's arrangements."

"But what's the trouble? Is he kicking about only getting twenty pounds?"

"No. He thinks fighting's sinful!"

"What?"

"Nothing more nor less, Corky, my boy. Like chumps, we took our eyes off him for half a second this morning, and he sneaked off to that revival meeting. Went out shortly after a light and wholesome breakfast for what he called a bit of a mooch round, and came in half an hour ago a changed man. Full of loving-kindness, curse him. Nasty shifty gleam in his eye. Told us he thought fighting sinful and it was all off, and then buzzed out to spread the Word."

I was shaken to the core. Wilberforce Billson, the peerless but temperamental Battler, had never been an ideal pugilist to manage, but hitherto he had drawn the line at anything like this. Other little problems which he might have brought up for his manager to solve might have been overcome by patience and tact; but not this one. The psychology of Mr. Billson was as an open book to me. He possessed one of those single-track minds, capable of accommodating but one idea at a time, and he had the tenacity of the simple soul. Argument would leave him unshaken. On that bone-like head Reason would beat in vain. And, these things being so, I was at a loss to account for Ukridge's extraordinary calm. His fortitude in the hour of ruin amazed me.

His next remark, however, offered an explanation.

"We're putting on a substitute," he said.

I was relieved.

"Oh, you've got a substitute? That's a bit of luck. Where did you find him?"

"As a matter of lact, laddie, I've decided to go on myself."

"What! You!"

"Only way out, my boy. No other solution."

I stared at the man. Years of the closest acquaintance with S. F. Ukridge had rendered me almost surprise-proof at anything he might do, but this was too much.

"Do you mean to tell me that you seriously intend to go out there to-night and appear in the ring?" I cried.

"Perfectly straightforward business-like proposition, old man," said Ukridge, stoutly. "I'm in excellent shape. I sparred with Billson every day while he was training."

"Yes, but——"

"The fact is, laddie, you don't realize my potentialities. Recently, it's true, I've allowed myself to become slack and what you might call enervated, but, damme, when I was on that trip in that tramp-steamer, scarcely a week used to go by without my having a good earnest scrap with somebody. Nothing barred," said Ukridge, musing lovingly on the care-free past, "except biting and bottles."

"Yes, but, hang it—a professional pugilist!"

"Well, to be absolutely accurate, laddie," said Ukridge, suddenly dropping the heroic manner and becoming confidential, "the thing's going to be fixed. Izzy Previn has seen the bloke Thomas's manager, and has arranged a gentleman's agreement. The manager, a Class A bloodsucker, insists on us giving his man another twenty pounds after the fight, but that can't be helped. In return, the Thomas bloke consents to play light for three rounds, at the end of which period, laddie, he will tap me on the side of the head and I shall go down and out, a popular loser. What's more, I'm allowed to hit him hard—once—just so long as it isn't on the nose. So you see, a little tact, a little diplomacy, and the whole thing fixed up as satisfactorily as anyone could wish."

"But suppose the audience demands its money back when they find they're going to see a substitute?"

"My dear old horse," protested Ukridge, "surely you don't imagine that a man with a business head like mine overlooked that?

The mop dripped dirty water as she brandished it; and the man, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder, proceeded rapidly on his way.

Naturally, I'm going to fight as Battling Billson. Nobody knows him in this town. I'm a good big chap, just as much a heavyweight as he is. No, laddie, pick how you will you can't pick a flaw in this."

"Why mayn't you hit him on the nose?"

"I don't know. People have these strange whims. And now, Corky, my boy, I think you had better leave me. I ought to relax."

THE Oddfellows' Hall was certainly filling up nicely when I arrived that night. Indeed, it seemed as though Llunindnno's devotees of sport would cram it to the roof. I took my place in the line before the pay-window, and, having completed the business end of the transaction, went in and inquired my way to the dressing-rooms. And presently, after wandering through divers passages, I came upon Ukridge, clad for the ring and swathed in his familiar yellow mackintosh.

"You're going to have a wonderful house," I said. "The populace is rolling up in shoals."

He received the information with a strange lack of enthusiasm. I looked at him in concern, and was disquieted by his forlorn appearance. That face, which had beamed so triumphantly at our last meeting, was pale and set. Those eyes, which normally shone with the flame of an unquenchable optimism, seemed dull and careworn. And even as I looked at him he seemed to rouse himself from a stupor and, reaching out for his shirt, which hung on a near-by peg, proceeded to pull it over his head.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

His head popped out of the shirt, and he eyed me wanly.

"I'm off," he announced, briefly.

"Off? How do you mean, off?" I tried to soothe what I took to be an eleventh-hour attack of stage-fright. "You'll be all right."

Ukridge laughed hollowly.

"Once the gong goes, you'll forget the crowd."

"It isn't the crowd," said Ukridge, in a pale voice, climbing into his trousers. "Corky, old man," he went on, earnestly, "if ever you feel your angry passions rising to the point where you want to swat a stranger in a public place, restrain yourself. There's nothing in it. This bloke Thomas was in here a moment ago with his manager to settle the final details. He's the fellow I had the trouble with at the theatre last night!"

"The man you pulled out of the seat by his ears?" I gasped.

Ukridge nodded.

"Recognized me at once, confound him, and it was all his manager, a thoroughly decent cove whom I liked, could do to prevent him getting at me there and then."

"Good Lord!" I said, aghast at this grim development, yet thinking how thoroughly characteristic it was of Ukridge, when he had a whole townful of people to quarrel with, to pick the one professional pugilist.

At this moment, when Ukridge was lacing his left shoe, the door opened and a man came in.

The new-comer was stout, dark, and beady-eyed, and from his manner of easy comradeship and the fact that when he spoke he supplemented words with the language of the waving palm, I deduced that this must be Mr. Izzy Previn, recently trading as Isaac O'Brien. He was cheeriness itself.

"Vell," he said, with ill-timed exuberance, "how'th the boy?"

The boy cast a sour look at him.

"The house," proceeded Mr. Previn, with an almost lyrical enthusiasm, "is abtholutely full. Crammed, jammed, and packed. They're hanging from the roof by their eyelids. It'th goin' to be a knock-out."

The expression, considering the circumstances, could hardly have been less happily chosen. Ukridge winced painfully, then spoke in no uncertain voice.

"I'm not going to fight!"

Mr. Previn's exuberance fell from him like a garment. His cigar dropped from his mouth, and his beady eyes glittered with sudden consternation.

"What do you mean?"

"Rather an unfortunate thing has happened," I explained. "It seems that this man Thomas is a fellow Ukridge had trouble with at the theatre last night."

"What do you mean, Ukridge?" broke in Mr. Previn. "This is Battling Billson."

"I've told Corky all about it," said Ukridge over his shoulder as he laced his right shoe. "Old pal of mine."

"Oh!" said Mr. Previn, relieved. "Of course, if Mr. Corky is a friend of yours and quite understands that all this is quite private among ourselves and don't want talking about outside, all right. But what were you thayin'? I can't make head or tail of it. How do you mean, you're not goin' to fight? Of course you're goin' to fight."

"Thomas was in here just now," I said. "Ukridge and he had a row at the theatre last night, and naturally Ukridge is afraid he will go back on the agreement."

"Nonthense," said Mr. Previn, and his manner was that of one soothing a refractory child. "*He* won't go back on the agreement. He promised he'd play light and he

Ukridge spoke in no uncertain voice. "I'm not going to fight!"

will play light. Gave me his word as a gentleman."

"He isn't a gentleman," Ukridge pointed out, moodily.

"But lithen!"

"I'm going to get out of here as quick as I dashed well can!"

"Conthider!" pleaded Mr. Previn, clawing great chunks out of the air.

Ukridge began to button his collar.

"Reflect!" moaned Mr. Previn. "There's that lovely audience all sitting out there, jammed like thardines, waiting for the thing to start. Do you expect me to go and tell 'em there ain't goin' to be no fight? I'm thurprised at you," said Mr. Previn, trying an appeal to his pride. "Where's your manly spirit? A big, husky feller like you, that's done all sorts of scrappin' in your time——"

"Not," Ukridge pointed out coldly, "with any damned professional pugilists who've got a grievance against me."

"*He* won't hurt you."

"He won't get the chance."

"You'll be as safe and cosy in that ring with him as if you was playing ball with your little thister."

Ukridge said he hadn't got a little sister.

"But think!" implored Mr. Previn, flapping like a seal. "Think of the money! Do you realize we'll have to return it all, every penny of it?"

A spasm of pain passed over Ukridge's face, but he continued buttoning his collar.

"And not only that," said Mr. Previn, "but, if you ask me, they'll be so mad when they hear there ain't goin' to be no fight, they'll lynch me."

Ukridge seemed to regard this possibility with calm.

"And you, too," added Mr. Previn.

Ukridge started. It was a plausible theory, and one that had not occurred to him before. He paused irresolutely. And at this moment a man came hurrying in.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, fussily. "Thomas has been in the ring for five minutes. Isn't your man ready?"

"In one half tick," said Mr. Previn. He turned meaningly to Ukridge. "That's right, ain't it? You'll be ready in half a tick?"

Ukridge nodded wanly. In silence he shed shirt, trousers, shoes, and collar, parting from them as if they were old friends whom he never expected to see again. One wistful glance he cast at his mackintosh, lying forlornly across a chair; and then, with more than a suggestion of a funeral procession, we started down the corridor that led to the main hall. The hum of many voices came to us; there was a sudden blaze of light, and we were there.

I MUST say for the sport-loving citizens of Llunindnno that they appeared to be fair-minded men. Stranger in their midst though he was, they gave Ukridge an excellent reception as he climbed into the ring; and for a moment, such is the tonic effect of applause on a large scale, his depression seemed to lift. A faint, gratified smile played about his drawn mouth, and I think it would have developed into a bashful grin, had he not at this instant caught sight of the redoubtable Mr. Thomas towering massively across the way. I saw him blink, as one who, thinking absently of this and that, walks suddenly into a lamp-post; and his look of unhappiness returned.

My heart bled for him. If the offer of my little savings in the bank could have transported him there and then to the safety of his London lodgings, I would have made it unreservedly. Mr. Previn had disappeared, leaving me standing at the ring-side, and as nobody seemed to object I remained there, thus getting an excellent view of the mass of bone and sinew that made up Lloyd Thomas. And there was certainly plenty of him to see.

Mr. Thomas was, I should imagine, one of those men who do not look their most formidable in mufti—for otherwise I could not conceive how even the fact that he had stolen his seat could have led Ukridge to lay the hand of violence upon him. In the exiguous costume of the ring he looked a person from whom the sensible man would suffer almost any affront with meekness. He was about six feet in height, and where ever a man could bulge with muscle he bulged. For a moment my anxiety for Ukridge was tinged with a wistful regret that I should never see this sinewy citizen in action with Mr. Billson. It would, I mused, have been a battle worth coming even to Llunindnno to see.

The referee, meanwhile, had been introducing the principals in the curt, impressive fashion of referees. He now retired, and with a strange foreboding note a gong sounded on the farther side of the ring. The seconds scuttled under the ropes. The man Thomas, struggling—it seemed to me—with powerful emotions, came ponderously out of his corner.

In these reminiscences of a vivid and varied career, it is as a profound thinker that I have for the most part had occasion to portray Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge. I was now to be reminded that he also had it in him to be a doer. Even as Mr. Thomas shuffled towards him, his left fist shot out and thudded against the other's ribs. In short, in a delicate and difficult situation, Ukridge was comporting himself with an adequacy that surprised me. However great might have been his reluctance to embark on this contest, once in he was doing well.

And then, half-way through the first round, the truth dawned upon me. Injured though Mr. Thomas had been, the gentleman's agreement still held. The word of a Thomas was as good as his bond. Poignant though his dislike of Ukridge might be, nevertheless, having pledged himself to mildness and self-restraint for the first three rounds, he intended to abide by the contract. Probably, in the interval between his visit to Ukridge's dressing-room and his appearance in the ring, his manager had been talking earnestly to him. At any rate, whether it was managerial authority or his own sheer nobility of character that influenced him, the fact remains that he treated Ukridge with a quite remarkable forbearance, and the latter reached his corner at the end of round one practically intact.

And it was this that undid him. No sooner had the gong sounded for round two than out he pranced from his corner, thoroughly above himself. He bounded at Mr. Thomas like a Dervish.

I could read his thoughts as if he had spoken them. Nothing could be clearer than that he had altogether failed to grasp the true position of affairs. Instead of recog-

nizing his adversary's forbearance for what it was and being decently grateful for it, he was filled with a sinful pride. Here, he told himself, was a man who had a solid grievance against him—and, dash it, the fellow couldn't hurt him a bit. What the whole thing boiled down to, he felt, was that he, Ukridge, was better than he had suspected, a man to be reckoned with, and one who could show a distinguished gathering of patrons of sport something worth looking at. The consequence was that, where any sensible person would have grasped the situation at once and endeavoured to show his appreciation by toying with Mr. Thomas in gingerly fashion, whispering soothing compliments into his ear during the clinches, and generally trying to lay the foundations of a beautiful friendship against the moment when the gentleman's agreement should lapse, Ukridge committed the one unforgivable act. There was a brief moment of fiddling and feinting in the centre of the ring, then a sharp smacking sound, a startled yelp, and Mr. Thomas, with gradually reddening eye, leaning against the ropes and muttering to himself in Welsh.

Ukridge had hit him on the nose!

ONCE more I must pay a tribute to the fair-mindedness of the sportsmen of Llunindnno. The stricken man was one of them—possibly Llunindnno's favourite son—yet nothing could have exceeded the heartiness with which they greeted the visitor's achievement. A shout went up as if Ukridge had done each individual present a personal favour. It continued as he advanced buoyantly upon his antagonist, and—to show how entirely Llunindnno audiences render themselves impartial and free from any personal bias—it became redoubled as Mr. Thomas, swinging a fist like a ham, knocked Ukridge flat on his back. Whatever happened, so long as it was sufficiently violent, seemed to be all right with that broad-minded audience.

Ukridge heaved himself laboriously to one knee. His sensibilities had been ruffled by this unexpected blow, about fifteen times as hard as the others he had received since the beginning of the affray, but he was a man of mettle and determination. However humbly he might quail before a threatening landlady, or however nimbly he might glide down a side-street at the sight of an approaching creditor, there was nothing wrong with his fighting heart when it came to a straight issue between man and man, untinged by the financial element. He struggled painfully to his feet, while Mr. Thomas, now definitely abandoning the gentleman's agreement, hovered about him with ready fists, only restrained by the fact that one of Ukridge's gloves still touched the floor.

It was at this tensest of moments that a voice spoke in my ear.

"'Alf a mo', mister!"

A hand pushed me gently aside. Something large obscured the lights. And Wilberforce Billson, squeezing under the ropes, clambered into the ring.

FOR the purposes of the historian it was a good thing that for the first few moments after this astounding occurrence a dazed silence held the audience in its grip. Otherwise, it might have been difficult to probe motives and explain underlying causes. I think the spectators were either too surprised to shout, or else they entertained for a few brief seconds the idea that Mr. Billson was the forerunner of a posse of plain-clothes police about to raid the place. At any rate, for a space they were silent, and he was enabled to say his say.

"Fightin'," bellowed Mr. Billson, "ain't right!"

There was an uneasy rustle in the audience. The voice of the referee came thinly, saying, "Here! Hi!"

"Sinful," explained Mr. Billson, in a voice like a fog-horn.

His oration was interrupted by Mr. Thomas, who was endeavouring to get round him and attack Ukridge. The Battler pushed him gently back.

"Gents," he roared, "I, too, have been a man of voylence! I 'ave struck men in anger. R, yes! But I 'ave seen the light. Oh, my brothers——"

The rest of his remarks were lost. With a startling suddenness the frozen silence melted. In every part of the hall indignant seatholders were rising to state their views.

But it is doubtful whether, even if he had been granted a continuance of their attention, Mr. Billson would have spoken to much greater length; for at this moment Lloyd Thomas, who had been gnawing at the strings of his gloves with the air of a man who is able to stand just so much and whose limit has been exceeded, now suddenly shed these obstacles to the freer expression of self, and, advancing barehanded, smote Mr. Billson violently on the jaw.

Mr. Billson turned. He was pained, one could see that, but more spiritually than physically. For a moment he seemed uncertain how to proceed. Then he turned the other cheek.

The fermenting Mr. Thomas smote that, too.

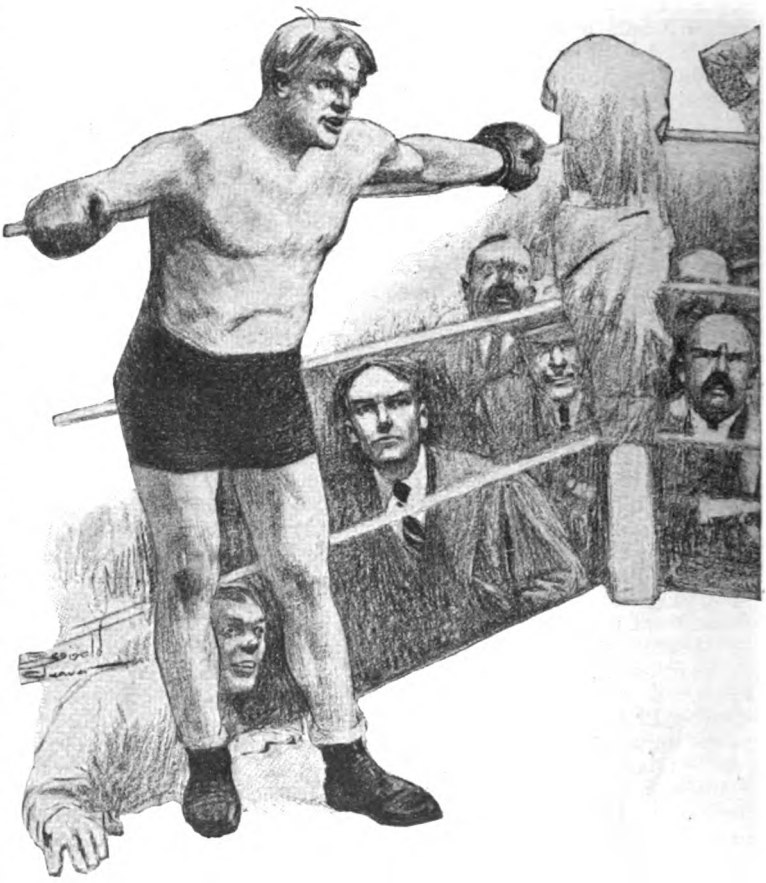
There was no vacillation or uncertainty now about Wilberforce Billson. He plainly considered that he had done all that could reasonably be expected of any pacifist. A man has only two cheeks. He flung up a mast-like arm to block a third blow, countered with an accuracy and spirit which sent his aggressor reeling to the ropes; and then, swiftly removing his coat, went into action with the unregenerate zeal that had made him the petted hero of a hundred waterfronts. And I, tenderly scooping Ukridge up as he dropped from the ring, hurried him away along the corridor to his dressing-room. I would have given much to remain and witness a mix-up which, if the police did not interfere, promised to be the battle of the ages, but the claims of friendship are paramount.

Ten minutes later, however, when Ukridge, washed, clothed, and restored as near to the normal as a man may be who has received the full weight of a Lloyd Thomas on a vital spot, was reaching for his mackintosh, there filtered through the intervening doors and passageways a sudden roar so compelling that my sporting spirit declined to ignore it.

"Back in a minute, old man," I said.

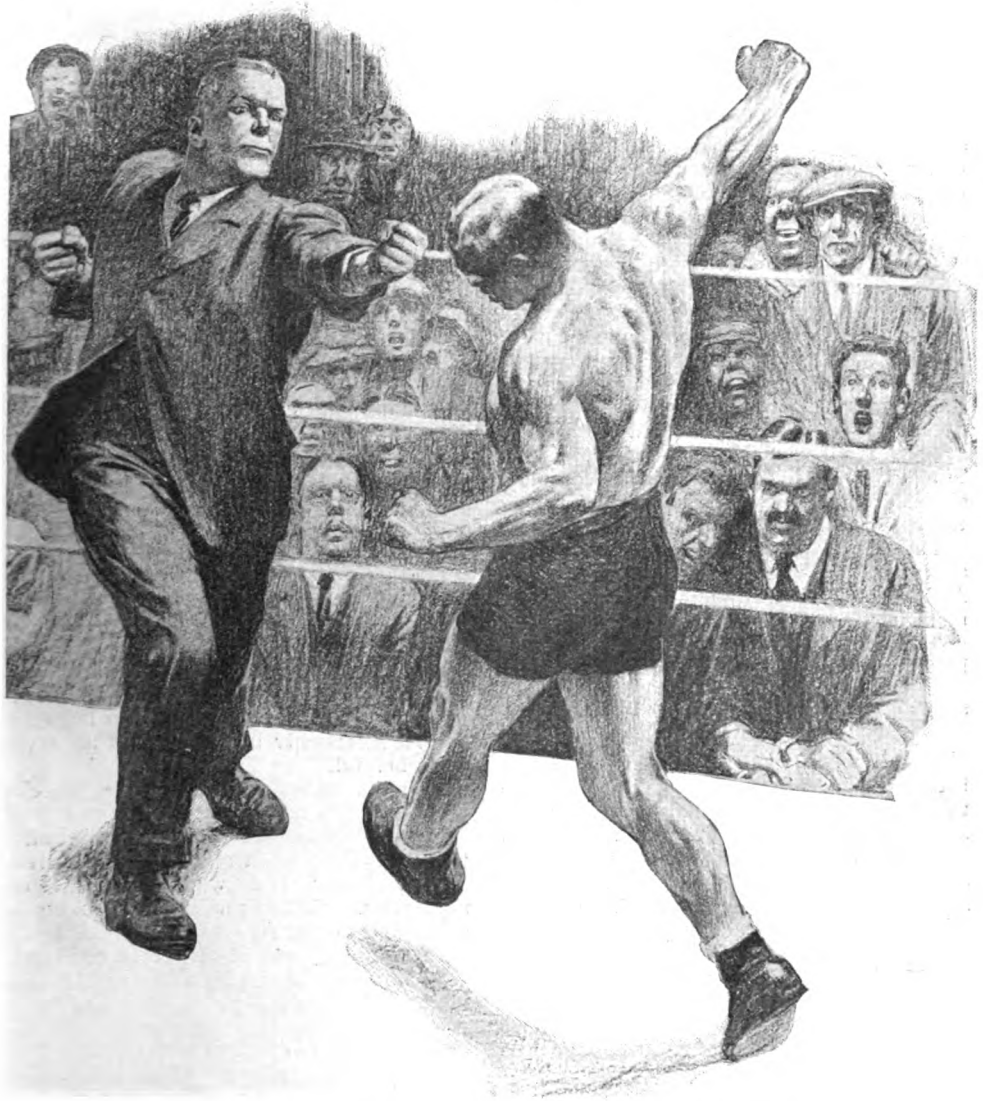
And, urged by that ever-swelling roar, I cantered back to the hall.

IN the interval during which I had been ministering to my stricken friend a certain decorum seemed to have been restored to the proceedings. The conflict had lost its first riotous abandon. Upholders of the decencies of debate had induced Mr. Thomas to resume his gloves, and a pair had also been thrust upon the Battler. Moreover, it was apparent that the etiquette of the tourney now governed the conflict, for rounds had been introduced, and one had just finished as I came in view of the ring. Mr. Billson was leaning back in a chair in one corner undergoing treatment by his seconds, and in the opposite corner loomed Mr. Thomas;



Billson flung up an arm to block a third blow, and countered

and one sight of the two men was enough to tell me what had caused that sudden tremendous outburst of enthusiasm among the patriots of Llunindnno. In the last stages of the round which had just concluded the native son must have hung open, and exhaustion was writ large upon him. Mr. Thomas, on the contrary, leaned forward with hands on knees, wearing an impatient look, as if this formality of a rest between rounds irked his imperious spirit.



with an accuracy and spirit which sent his aggressor reeling to the ropes.

forged ahead in no uncertain manner. Perhaps some chance blow had found its way through the Battler's guard, laying him open and defenceless to the final attack. For his attitude, as he sagged in his corner, was that of one whose moments are numbered. His eyes were closed, his mouth

The gong sounded and he sprang from his seat.

"Laddie!" breathed an anguished voice, and a hand clutched my arm.

I was dimly aware of Ukridge standing beside me. I shook him off. This was no moment for conversation. My whole

attention was concentrated on what was happening in the ring.

"I say, laddie!"

Matters in there had reached that tense stage when audiences lose their self-control—when strong men stand on seats and weak men cry "Siddown!" The air was full of that electrical thrill that precedes the knock-out.

And the next moment it came. But it was not Lloyd Thomas who delivered it. From some mysterious reservoir of vitality Wilberforce Billson, the pride of Bermondsey, who an instant before had been reeling under his antagonist's blows like a stricken hulk before a hurricane, produced that one last punch that wins battles. Up it came, whizzing straight to its mark, a stupendous, miraculous upper-cut which caught Mr. Thomas on the angle of the jaw just as he lurched forward to complete his task. It was the last word. Anything milder Llunindnno's favourite son might have borne with fortitude, for his was a teak-like frame impervious to most things short of dynamite; but this was final. It left no avenue for argument or evasion. Lloyd Thomas spun round once in a complete circle, dropped his hands, and sank slowly to the ground.

There was one wild shout from the audience, and then a solemn hush fell. And in this hush Ukridge's voice spoke once more in my ear.

"I say, laddie, that blighter Previn has bolted with every penny of the receipts!"

THE little sitting-room of Number Seven, Caerleon Street, was very quiet and gave the impression of being dark. This was because there is so much of Ukridge and he takes Fate's blows so hardly that, when anything goes wrong, his gloom seems to fill a room like a fog. For some minutes after our return from the Oddfellows' Hall a gruesome silence had prevailed. Ukridge had exhausted his vocabulary on the subject of Mr. Previn; and as for me, the disaster seemed so tremendous as to render words of sympathy a mere mockery.

"And there's another thing I've just remembered," said Ukridge, hollowly, stirring on his sofa.

"What's that?" I inquired, in a bedside voice.

"The bloke Thomas. He was to have got another twenty pounds."

"He'll hardly claim it, surely?"

"He'll claim it all right," said Ukridge, moodily. "Except, by Jove," he went on, a sudden note of optimism in his voice, "that he doesn't know where I am. I was forgetting that. Lucky we legged it away from the hall before he could grab me."

"You don't think that Previn, when he was making the arrangements with Thomas's manager, may have mentioned where you were staying?"

"Not likely. Why should he? What reason would he have?"

"Gentleman to see you, sir," crooned the aged female at the door.

The gentleman walked in. It was the man who had come to the dressing-room to announce that Thomas was in the ring; and though on that occasion we had not been formally introduced I did not need Ukridge's faint groan to tell me who he was.

"Mr. Previn?" he said. He was a brisk man, direct in manner and speech.

"He's not here," said Ukridge.

"You'll do. You're his partner. I've come for that twenty pounds."

There was a painful silence.

"It's gone," said Ukridge.

"What's gone?"

"The money, dash it. And Previn, too. He's bolted."

A hard look came into the other's eyes. Dim as the light was, it was strong enough to show his expression, and that expression was not an agreeable one.

"That won't do," he said, in a metallic voice.

"Now, my dear old horse——"

"It's no good trying anything like that on me. I want my money, or I'm going to call a policeman. Now, then!"

"But, laddie, be reasonable."

"Made a mistake in not getting it in advance. But now'll do. Out with it!"

"But I keep telling you Previn's bolted!"

"He's certainly bolted," I put in, trying to be helpful.

"That's right, mister," said a voice at the door. "I met 'im sneakin' away."

It was Wilberforce Billson. He stood in the doorway diffidently, as one not sure of his welcome. His whole bearing was apologetic. He had a nasty bruise on his left cheek and one of his eyes was closed, but he bore no other signs of his recent conflict.

Ukridge was gazing upon him with bulging eyes.

"You *met* him!" he moaned. "You actually met him?"

"R," said Mr. Billson. "When I was comin' to the 'all. I seen 'im puttin' all that money into a liddle bag, and then 'e 'urried off."

"Good Lord!" I cried. "Didn't you suspect what he was up to?"

"R," agreed Mr. Billson. "I always knew 'e was a wrong 'un."

"Then why, you poor woollen-headed fish," bellowed Ukridge, exploding, "why on earth didn't you stop him?"

"I never thought of that," admitted Mr. Billson, apologetically.

"I want my money, or I'm going to call a policeman. Now, then!"

Ukridge laughed a hideous laugh.

"I just pushed 'im in the face," proceeded Mr. Billson, "and took the liddle bag away from 'im."

He placed on the table a small weather-worn suitcase that jingled musically as he moved it; then, with the air of one who dismisses some triviality from his mind, moved to the door.

"'Scuse me, gents," said Battling Billson, deprecatingly. "Can't stop. I've got to go and spread the light."

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse next month.)

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER VIII.

PULLING UP THE ANCHOR.

A CHANGE OF PLANS.

MY life had been a pleasant one with my steadily-increasing literary success, my practice, which was enough to keep me pleasantly occupied, and my sport, which I treat in a separate chapter. Suddenly, however, there came a development which shook me out of my rut, and caused an absolute change in my life and plans. One daughter, Mary, had been born to us, our household was a happy one, and as I have never had personal ambitions, since the simple things of life have always been the most pleasant to me, it is possible that I would have remained in Southsea permanently but for this new episode in my life. It arose when, in 1889, Koch announced that he had discovered a sure cure for consumption and that he would demonstrate it upon a certain date in Berlin.

A great urge came upon me suddenly that I should go to Berlin and see him do so. I could give no clear reason for this, but it was an irresistible impulse, and I at once determined to go. Had I been a well-known doctor or a specialist in consumption it would have been more intelligible, but I had, as a matter of fact, no great interest in the more recent developments of my own profession, and a very strong belief that much of the so-called progress was illusory. However, at a few hours' notice I packed up a bag and started off alone upon this curious adventure. I had had an interchange of letters with Mr. W. T. Stead over some matter, and I called upon him at the *Review of Reviews* office as I passed through London to ask him if he could give me an introduction to Koch or to Dr. Bergmann, who was to give the demonstration. Mr. Stead was very amiable to this big unknown provincial doctor, and he gave me a letter for the British Ambassador —Sir Edward Malet, if I remember right— and for Mr. Lowe, the *Times* correspondent. He also asked me to do a character sketch of Koch for him, adding that he would have Count Mattei as a feature of his magazine this month and Koch the next. I said: "Then you will have the greatest man of science and the greatest quack in Europe following each other." Stead glared at me angrily, for it seems that the Mattei treatment, with its blue electricity and the rest of it, was at that moment his particular fad. However, we parted amiably, and all through his life we kept in distant touch, though we came into sharp collision at the time of the Boer War. He was a brave and honest man, and if he was impulsive at times, it was only the sudden outflame of that fire which made him the great force for good that he was.

I went on to Berlin that night, and found myself in the Continental express with a very handsome and courteous London physician bound upon the same errand as myself. We passed most of the night

Copyright, 1923, by A. Conan Doyle.

talking, and I learned that his name was Malcolm Morris, and that he also had been a provincial doctor, but that he had come to London and had made a considerable hit as a skin specialist in Harley Street. It was the beginning of a friendship which still endures.

MY VISIT TO BERLIN.

Having arrived at Berlin the great thing was to be present at Bergmann's demonstration, which was to be next day at twelve. I went to our Ambassador, was kept long waiting, had a chilly reception, and was dismissed without help or consolation. Then I tried the *Times* correspondent, but he could not help me either. He and his amiable wife showed me every courtesy and invited me to dinner that night. Tickets were simply not to be had, and neither money nor interest could procure them. I conceived the wild idea of getting one from Koch himself and made my way to his house. While there I had the curious experience of seeing his mail arrive—a large sack full of letters, which was emptied out on the floor of the hall, and exhibited every sort of stamp in Europe. It was a sign of all the sad, broken lives and wearied hearts which were turning in hope to Berlin. Koch remained a veiled prophet, however, and would see neither me nor anyone else. I was fairly at my wits' ends and could not imagine how I could attain my end.

Next day I went down to the great building where the address was to be given and managed by bribing the porter to get into the outer hall. The huge audience was assembling in a room beyond. I tried further bribing that I might be slipped in, but the official became abusive. People streamed past me, but I was always the waiter at the gate. Finally everyone had gone in, and then a group of men came hustling across, Bergmann, bearded and formidable, in the van, with a tail of house surgeons and satellites behind him. I threw myself across his path. "I have come a thousand miles," said I. "May I not come in?" He halted and glared at me through his spectacles. "Perhaps you would like to take my place," he roared, working himself up into that sudden folly of excitement which seems so strange in the heavy German nature. "That is the only place left. Yes, yes, take my place by all means. My classes are filled with Englishmen already." He fairly spat out the word "Englishmen," and I learned afterwards that some recent quarrel with Morell Mackenzie over the illness of the Emperor Frederick had greatly incensed him. I am glad to say that I kept my temper and my polite manner, which is always the best shield when one is met by brutal rudeness. "Not at all," I said. "I would not intrude if there is really no room." He glared at me again, all beard and spectacles, and rushed on with his court all grinning at the snub which the presumptuous Englishman had received. One of them lingered, however—a kindly American. "That was bad behaviour," said he. "See here! If you meet me at four this afternoon I will show you my full notes of the lecture, and I know the cases he is about to show, so we can see them together to-morrow." Then he followed on.

SO it came about that I attained my end after all, but in a roundabout way. I studied the lecture and the cases, and I had the temerity to disagree with every one, and to come to the conclusion that the whole thing was experimental and premature. A wave of madness had seized the world, and from all parts, notably from England, poor afflicted people were rushing to Berlin for a cure, some of them in such advanced stages of disease that they died in the train. I felt so strongly about it and so sure of my ground that I wrote a letter of warning to the *Daily Telegraph*, and I rather think that this letter was the very first which appeared upon the side of doubt and caution. I need not say that the event proved the truth of my forecast.

MALCOLM MORRIS'S ADVICE.

Two days later I was back in Southsea, but I came back a changed man. I had spread my wings and had felt something of the powers within me. Especially I had been influenced by a long talk with Malcolm Morris, in which he assured me that I was wasting my life in the provinces and had too small a field for my activities. He insisted that I should leave general practice and go to London. I answered that I was by no means sure of my literary success as yet, and that I could not so easily abandon the medical career which had cost my mother such sacrifices and myself so many years of study. He asked me if there was any special branch of the profession on which I could concentrate so as to get away from general practice. I said that of late years I had been interested in eye work, and had amused myself by correcting refractions and prescribing glasses in the Portsmouth Eye Hospital under Mr. Vernon Ford. "Well," said Morris, "why not specialize upon the eye? Go to Vienna, put in six months' work, come back and start in London. Thus you will have a nice clean life with plenty of leisure for your literature." I came home with this

great suggestion buzzing in my head, and as my wife was quite willing, and Mary, my little girl, was old enough now to be left with her grandmother, there seemed to be no obstacle in the way. There were no difficulties about disposing of the practice, for it was so small and so purely personal that it could not be sold to another and simply had to dissolve.

LEARNING TO FACE AN AUDIENCE.

The Portsmouth Literary and Scientific Society gave me a God-speed banquet. I have many pleasant and some comic reminiscences of this society, of which I had been secretary for several years. We kept the sacred flame burning in the old city with our weekly papers and discussions during the long winters. It was there that I learned to face an audience, which proved to be of the first importance for my life's work. I was naturally of a very nervous, backward, self-distrustful disposition in such things, and I have been told that the signal that I was about to join in the discussion was that the whole long bench on which I sat, with everyone on it, used to shake with my emotion. But, once up, I learned to speak out, to conceal my trepidations, and to choose my phrases. I gave three papers, one on the Arctic seas, one on Carlyle, and one on Gibbon. The former gave me a quite unmerited reputation as a sportsman, for I borrowed from a local taxidermist every bird and beast that he possessed which could conceivably find its way into the Arctic circle. These I piled upon the lecture table, and the audience, concluding that I had shot them all, looked upon me with great respect. Next morning they were back with the taxidermist once more.

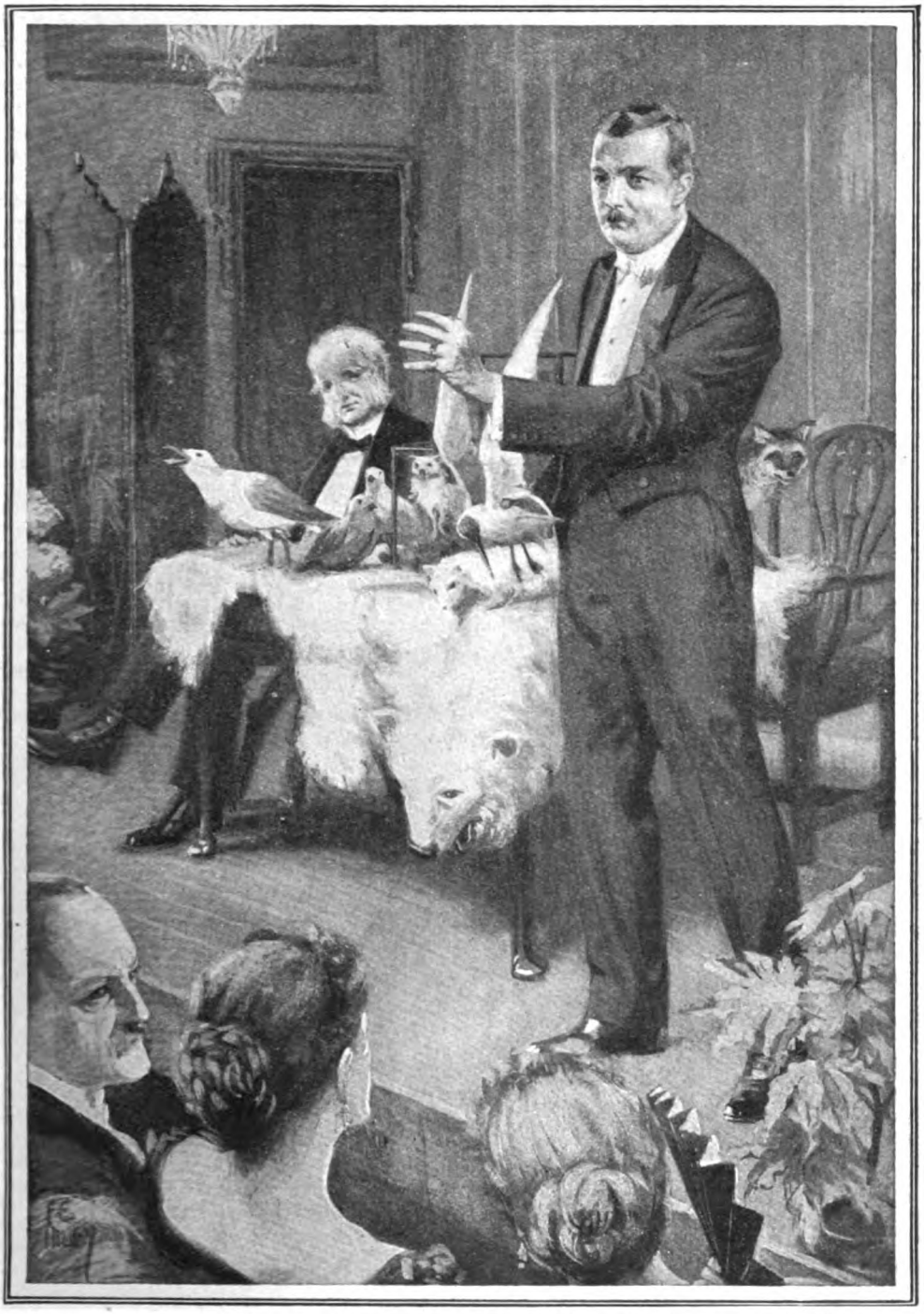
We had some weird people and incidents at these debates. I remember one very learned discussion on fossils and the age of the strata, which was ended by a cadaverous major-general of the Evangelical persuasion, who rose and said in a hollow voice that all this speculation was vain, and indeed incomprehensible, since we knew on an authority which could not possibly be questioned that the world was made exactly five thousand eight hundred and ninety years ago. This put the lid on the debate and we all crept home to bed.

"ONE OF THE TIGHT CORNERS OF MY LIFE."

My political work also caused me to learn to speak. I was what was called a Liberal Unionist—that is, a man whose general position was Liberal, but who could not see his way to support Gladstone's Irish policy. Perhaps we were wrong. However, that was my view at the time. I had a dreadful first experience of platform speaking on a large scale, for at a huge meeting at the Amphitheatre the candidate, Sir William Crossman, was delayed, and to prevent a fiasco I was pushed on at a moment's notice to face an audience of three thousand people. It was one of the tight corners of my life. I hardly knew myself what I said, but the Irish part of me came to my aid and supplied me with a torrent of more or less incoherent words and similes which roused the audience greatly, though it read to me afterwards more like a comic stump speech than a serious political effort. But it was what they wanted, and they were mostly on their feet before I finished. I was amazed when I read it next day, and especially the last crowning sentence, which was: "England and Ireland are wedded together with the sapphire wedding ring of the sea, and what God has placed together let no man pluck asunder." It was not very good logic, but whether it was eloquence or rhodomontade I could not even now determine.

I was one of the acting secretaries when Mr. Balfour came down to address a great meeting, and as such, when the hall was full, I waited on the kerb outside to receive him. Presently his carriage drove up and out he stepped, tall, thin, and aristocratic. There were two notorious partisans of the other side waiting for him, and I warned them not to make trouble. However, the moment Balfour appeared, one of them opened a huge mouth with the intention of emitting a howl of execration. But it never got out, for I clapped my hand pretty forcibly over the orifice while I held him by the neck with the other hand. His companion hit me on the head with a stick, and was promptly knocked down by one of my companions. Meanwhile Balfour got safely in, and we two secretaries followed, rather dishevelled after our adventure. I met Lord Balfour several times in after life, but I never told him how I had once had my hat smashed in his defence.

What with the Literary Society and the politicians, I left a gap behind me in Portsmouth, and so did my gentle wife, who was universally popular for her amiable and generous character. It was a wrench to us to leave so many good friends. However, towards the end of 1889 the die was cast, and we closed the door of Bush Villa behind us for the last time. I had days of privation there and days of growing success during the eight long years that I had spent in Portsmouth. We had got so used to it that it was with a sense of wonderful freedom and exhilarating adventure that we set forth upon the next phase of our lives.



I borrowed from a local taxidermist every bird and beast that he possessed. These I piled upon the table, and the audience, concluding that I had shot them all, looked upon me with great respect.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT BREAK.

IN VIENNA.

WE set forth upon a bitter winter day at the close of 1889 with every chance of being snowed up on our long trek. We got through all right, however, and found ourselves in Vienna, arriving on a deadly cold night, with deep snow under foot and a cutting blizzard in the air. As we looked from the station the electric lights threw out the shining silver drift of snowflakes against the absolute darkness of the sky. It was a gloomy, ominous reception, but half an hour afterwards, when we were in the warm, cosy, crowded, tobacco-laden restaurant attached to our hotel, we took a more cheerful view of our surroundings.

We found a modest *pension* which was within our means, and we put in a very pleasant four months, during which I attended eye lectures at the Krankenhaus, but could certainly have learned far more in London, for even if one has a fair knowledge of conversational German it is very different from following accurately a rapid lecture filled with technical terms. No doubt "has studied in Vienna" sounds well in a specialist's record, but it is usually taken for granted that he has exhausted his own country before going abroad, which was by no means the case with me. Therefore, so far as eye-work goes, my winter was wasted, nor can I trace any particular spiritual or intellectual advance. On the other hand, I saw a little of gay Viennese society, I received kind and welcome hospitality from Brinsley Richards, the *Times* correspondent, and his wife, and I had some excellent skating. I also wrote one short book, "The Doings of Raffles Haw," not a very notable achievement, by which I was able to pay my current expenses without encroaching on the very few hundred pounds which were absolutely all that I had in the world. This money was invested on the advice of a friend, and as it was almost all lost—like so much more that I have earned—it is just as well that I was never driven back upon it.

With the spring my work in Vienna had finished, if it can be said to have ever begun, and we returned *viâ* Paris, putting in a few days there with Landolt, who was the most famous French oculist of his time. It was great to find ourselves back in London once more with the feeling that we were now on the real field of battle, where we must conquer or perish, for our boats were burned behind us. It is easy now to look back and think that the issue was clear, but it was by no means so at the time, for I had earned little, though my reputation was growing. It was only my own inward conviction of the permanent merits of "The White Company," still appearing month by month in *Cornhill*, which sustained my confidence. I had come through so much in the early days at Southsea that nothing could alarm me personally, but I had a wife and child now, and the stern simplicity of life which was possible and even pleasant in early days was now no longer to be thought of.

I START AS A SPECIALIST.

We took rooms in Montague Place, and I went forth to search for some place where I could put up my plate as an oculist. I was aware that many of the big men do not find time to work out refractions, which in some cases of astigmatism take a long time to adjust when done by retinoscopy. I was capable at this work and liked it, so I hoped that some of it might drift my way. But to get it, it was clearly necessary that I should live among the big men, so that the patient could be easily referred to me. I searched the doctors' quarters, and at last found suitable accommodation at 2, Devonshire Place, which is at the top of Wimpole Street, and close to the classical Harley Street. There for a hundred and twenty pounds a year I got the use of a front room with part use of a waiting-room. I was soon to find that they were both waiting-rooms, and now I know that it was better so.

Every morning I walked from the lodgings at Montague Place, reached my consulting-room at ten, and sat there until three or four, with never a ring to disturb my serenity. Could better conditions for reflection and work be found? It was ideal, and so long as I was thoroughly unsuccessful in my professional venture there was every chance of improvement in my literary prospects. Therefore, when I returned to the lodgings at tea-time I bore my little sheaves with me, the first-fruits of a considerable harvest.

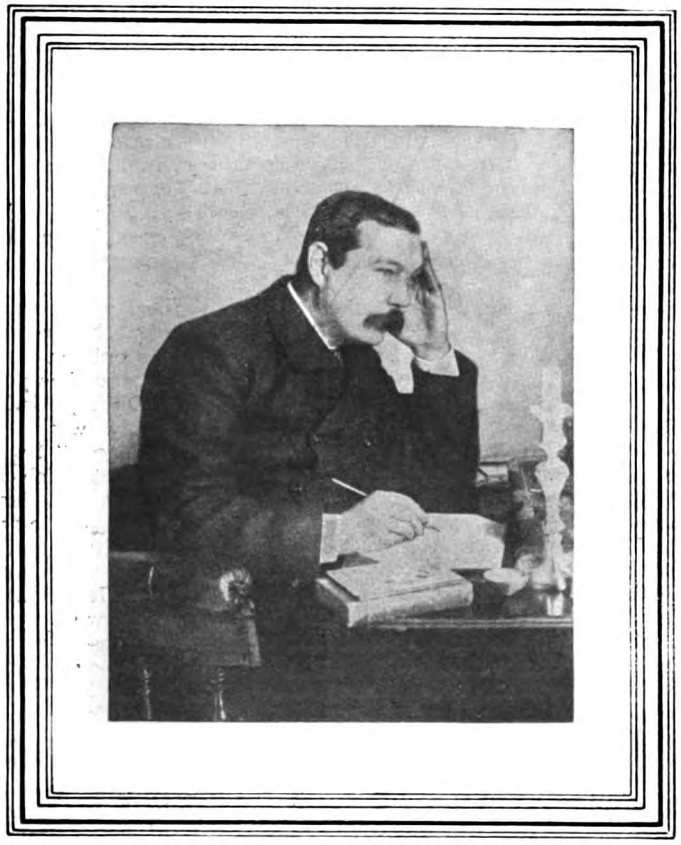
SHERLOCK HOLMES AND "THE STRAND."

A number of monthly magazines were coming out at that time, notable among which was THE STRAND, then as now under the editorship of Greenhough Smith. Considering these various journals with their

disconnected stories, it had struck me that a single character running through a series, if it only engaged the attention of the reader, would bind that reader to that particular magazine. On the other hand, it had long seemed to me that the ordinary serial might be an impediment rather than a help to a magazine, since, sooner or later, one missed one number and afterwards it had lost all interest. Clearly the ideal compromise was a character which carried through, and yet instalments which were each complete in themselves, so that the purchaser was always sure that he could read the whole contents of the magazine. I believe that I was the first to realize this and THE STRAND MAGAZINE the first to put it into practice.

Looking round for my central character I felt that Sherlock Holmes, whom I had already handled in two little books, would easily lend himself to a succession of short stories. These I began in the long hours of waiting in my consulting-room. Greenhough Smith liked them from the first, and encouraged me to go ahead with them. My literary affairs had been taken up by that king of agents, A. P. Watt, who relieved me of all the hateful bargaining, and handled things so well that any immediate anxiety for money soon disappeared. It was as well, for not one single patient had ever crossed the threshold of my room.

I was now once more at a cross-roads of my life, and Providence, which I recognize at every step, made me realize it in a very energetic and unpleasant way. I was starting off for my usual trudge one morning from our lodgings when icy shivers passed over me, and I only got back in time to avoid a total collapse. It was a virulent attack of influenza, at a time when influenza was in its deadly prime. Only three years before my dear sister Annette, after spending her whole life on the family needs, had died of it at Lisbon at the very moment when my success would have enabled me to recall her from her long servitude. Now it was my turn, and I very nearly followed her. I can remember no pain or extreme discomfort, and no psychic experiences, but for a week I was in great danger, and then found myself as weak as a child, and as emotional, but with a mind as clear as crystal. It was then, as I surveyed my own life, that I saw how foolish I was to waste my literary earnings in keeping up an oculist's room in Wimpole Street, and I determined with a wild rush of joy to cut the painter and to trust for ever to my power of writing. I remember in my delight taking the handkerchief which lay upon the coverlet in my



Conan Doyle and his most famous character.

This portrait was taken at the time the early Sherlock Holmes stories were written.

enfeebled hand and tossing it up to the ceiling in my exultation. I should at last be my own master. No longer would I have to conform to professional dress or try to please anyone else. I would be free to live how I liked and where I liked. It was one of the great moments of exultation of my life. The date was in August, 1890.

Presently I was about, hobbling on a stick and reflecting that if I lived to be eighty I knew already exactly how it would feel. I haunted house-agents, got lists of suburban villas, and spent some weeks, as my strength returned, in searching for a new home. Finally I found a suitable house, modest but comfortable, isolated and yet one of a row. It was 12, Tennison Road, South Norwood. There we settled down, and there I made my first effort to live entirely by my pen. It soon became evident that I had been playing the game well within my powers, and that I should have no difficulty in providing a sufficient income. It seemed as if I had settled into a life which might be continuous, and I little foresaw that an unexpected blow was about to fall upon us, and that we were not at the end, but really at the beginning, of our wanderings.

I could not know this, however, and I settled down with a stout heart to do some literary work worthy of the name. The difficulty of the Holmes work was that every story really needed as clear-cut and original a plot as a longish book would do. One cannot without effort spin plots at such a rate. They are apt to become thin or to break. I was determined, now that I had no longer the excuse of absolute pecuniary pressure, never again to write anything which was not as good as I could possibly make it, and therefore I would not write a Holmes story without a worthy plot and without a problem which interested my own mind, for that is the first requisite before you can interest anyone else. If I have been able to sustain this character for a long time, and if the public find, as they will find, that the last story is as good as the first, it is entirely due to the fact that I never, or hardly ever, forced a story. Some have thought there was a falling off in the stories, and the criticism was neatly expressed by a Cornish boatman who said to me, " I think, sir, when Holmes fell over that cliff he may not have killed himself, but, all the same, he was never quite the same man afterwards." I think, however, that if the reader began the series backwards, so that he brought a fresh mind to the last stories, he would agree with me that, though the general average may not be conspicuously high, still the last one is as good as the first.

"THE REFUGEES."

I was weary, however, of inventing plots, and I set myself now to do some work which would certainly be less remunerative but would be more ambitious from a literary point of view. I had long been attracted by the epoch of Louis the Fourteenth and by those Huguenots who were the French equivalents of our Puritans. I had a good knowledge of the memoirs of that date, and many notes already prepared, so that it did not take me long to write " The Refugees." It has stood the acid test of time very well, so I may say that it was a success. Soon after its appearance it was translated into French, and my dear old mother, herself a great French scholar, had the joy when she visited Fontainebleau to hear the official guide tell the drove of tourists that if they really wanted to know about the Court of the great monarch they would find the clearest and most accurate account in an Englishman's book, " The Refugees." I expect the guide would have been considerably astonished had he then and there been kissed by an elderly English lady, but it was an experience which he must have narrowly missed. I used in this book, also, a great deal which was drawn from Parkman, that great but neglected historian, who was in my opinion the greatest serious writer that America has produced.

During this Norwood interval I was certainly working hard, for besides " The Refugees " I wrote " The Great Shadow," a booklet which I should put in the very front of my work for merit, and two other little books on a very inferior plane—" The Parasite " and " Beyond the City." The latter was of a domestic type unusual for me. It was pirated in New York just before the new Copyright Act came into force, and the rascal publisher, thinking that a portrait—any sort of portrait—of the author would look well upon the cover, and being quite ignorant of my identity, put a very pretty and well-dressed young woman as my presentment. I still preserve a copy of this most flattering representation. All these books had some decent success, though none of it was remarkable. It was still the Sherlock Holmes stories for which the public clamoured, and these from time to time I endeavoured to supply. At last, after I had done two series of them, I saw that I was in danger of having my hand forced, and of being entirely identified with what I regarded as a lower stratum of literary achievement. Therefore, as a sign of my resolution, I determined to end the life of my hero.

THE "DEATH" OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

The idea was in my mind when I went with my wife for a short holiday in Switzerland,

in the course of which we walked down the Lauterbrunnen Valley. I saw there the wonderful falls of Reichenbach, a terrible place, and one that I thought would make a worthy tomb for poor Sherlock, even if I buried my banking account along with him. So there I laid him, fully determined that he should stay there—as, indeed, for some years he did. I was amazed at the concern expressed by the public. They say that a man is never properly appreciated until he is dead, and the general protest against my summary execution of Holmes taught me how many and how numerous were his friends. "You Brute" was the beginning of the letter of remonstrance which one lady sent me, and I expect she spoke for others besides herself. I heard of many who wept. I fear I was utterly callous myself, and only glad to have a chance of opening out into new fields of imagination, for the temptation of high prices made it difficult to get one's thoughts away from Holmes.

That Sherlock Holmes was anything but mythical to many is shown by the fact that I have had many letters addressed to him with requests that I forward them. Watson has also had a number of letters in which he has been asked for the address or for the autograph of his more brilliant *confrère*. A Press-cutting agency wrote to Watson asking whether Holmes would not wish to subscribe. When Holmes retired several elderly ladies were ready to keep house for him, and one sought to ingratiate herself by assuring me that she knew all about bee-keeping and could "segregate the queen." I had considerable offers also for Holmes if he would examine and solve various family mysteries. Once the offer—from Poland—was that I should myself go, and my reward was practically left to my own judgment. I had judgment enough, however, to avoid it altogether.

The "death" of Sherlock Holmes.

From the famous drawing by Sidney Paget, published in this magazine thirty years ago.

I have often been asked whether I had myself the qualities which I depicted, or whether I was merely the Watson that I look. Of course, I am well aware that it is one thing to grapple with a practical problem and quite another thing when you are allowed to solve it under your own conditions. I have no delusions about that. At the same time a man cannot spin a character out of his own inner consciousness and make it really life-like unless he has some possibilities of that character within him—which is a dangerous admission for one who has drawn so many villains as I. In my poem "The Inner Room," describing our multiplex personality, I say:—

"There are others who are sitting,
Grim as doom,
In the dim, ill-boding shadow
Of my room.
Darkling figures, stern or quaint,
Now a savage, now a saint,
Showing fitfully and faint
In the gloom."

Among those figures there may perhaps be an astute detective also, but I find that in real life in order to find him I have to inhibit all the others and get into a mood when there is no one in the room but he. Then I get results, and have several times solved problems by Holmes's methods after the police have been baffled. Yet I must admit that in ordinary life I am by no means observant, and that I have to throw myself into an artificial frame of mind before I can weigh evidence and anticipate the sequence of events.

"SHERLOCKOLMITOS."

People have often asked me whether I knew the end of a Holmes story before I

started it. Of course I did. One could not possibly steer a course if one did not know one's destination. The first thing is to get your idea. Having got that key-idea, one's next task is to conceal it, and lay emphasis upon everything which can make for a different explanation. Holmes, however, can see all the fallacies of the alternatives, and arrives more or less dramatically at the true solution by steps which he can describe and justify. He shows his powers by what the South Americans now call "Sherlock-olmitos," which means clever little deductions, which often have nothing to do with the matter in hand, but impress the reader with a general sense of power. The same effect is gained by his offhand allusion to other cases. Heaven knows how many titles I have thrown about in a casual way, and how many readers have begged me to satisfy their curiosity as to "Rigoletto and His Abominable Wife," "The Adventure of the Tired Captain," or "The Curious Experience of the Patterson Family in the Island of Uffa"! Once or twice, as in "The Adventure of the Second Stain," which in my judgment is one of the neatest of the stories, I did actually use the title years before I wrote a story to correspond.

THERE are some questions concerned with particular stories which turn up periodically from every quarter of the globe. In "The Adventure of the Priory School" Holmes remarks in his offhand way that by looking at a bicycle track on a damp moor one can say which way it was heading. I had so many remonstrances upon this point, varying from pity to anger, that I took out my bicycle and tried. I had imagined that the observations of the way in which the track of the hind wheel overlaid the track of the front one when the machine was not running dead straight would show the direction. I found that my correspondents were right and I was wrong, for this would be the same whichever way the cycle was moving. On the other hand, the real solution was much simpler, for on an undulating moor the wheels make a deeper impression uphill and a more shallow one downhill; so Holmes was justified of his wisdom after all.

Sometimes I have got upon dangerous ground where I have taken risks through my own want of knowledge of the correct atmosphere. I have, for example, never been a racing man, and yet I ventured to write "Silver Blaze," in which the mystery depends upon the laws of training and racing. The story is all right, and Holmes may have been at the top of his form, but my ignorance cries aloud to heaven. I read an excellent and very damaging criticism of the story in some sporting paper, written clearly by a man who *did* know, in which he explained the exact penalties which would have come upon everyone concerned if they had acted as I described. Half would have been in jail and the other half warned off the Turf for ever. However, I have never been nervous about details, and one must be masterful sometimes. When an alarmed editor wrote to me once: "There is no second line of rails at that point," I answered: "I make one." On the other hand, there are cases where accuracy is essential.

I do not wish to be ungrateful to Holmes, who has been a good friend to me in many ways. If I have sometimes been inclined to weary of him, it is because his character admits of no light or shade. He is a calculating machine, and anything you add to that simply weakens the effect. Thus the variety of the stories must depend upon the romance and compact handling of the plots. I would say a word for Watson also, who in the course of seven volumes never shows one gleam of humour or makes one single joke. To make a real character one must sacrifice everything to consistency and remember Goldsmith's criticism of Johnson that "he would make the little fishes talk like whales."

I do not think that I ever realized what a living actual personality Holmes had become to the more guileless readers until I heard of the very pleasing story of the char-à-bancs of French schoolboys who, when asked what they wanted to see first in London, replied unanimously that they wanted to see Mr. Holmes's lodgings in Baker Street. Many have asked me which house it is, but that is a point which for excellent reasons I will not decide.

SHERLOCK HOLMES ON THE STAGE.

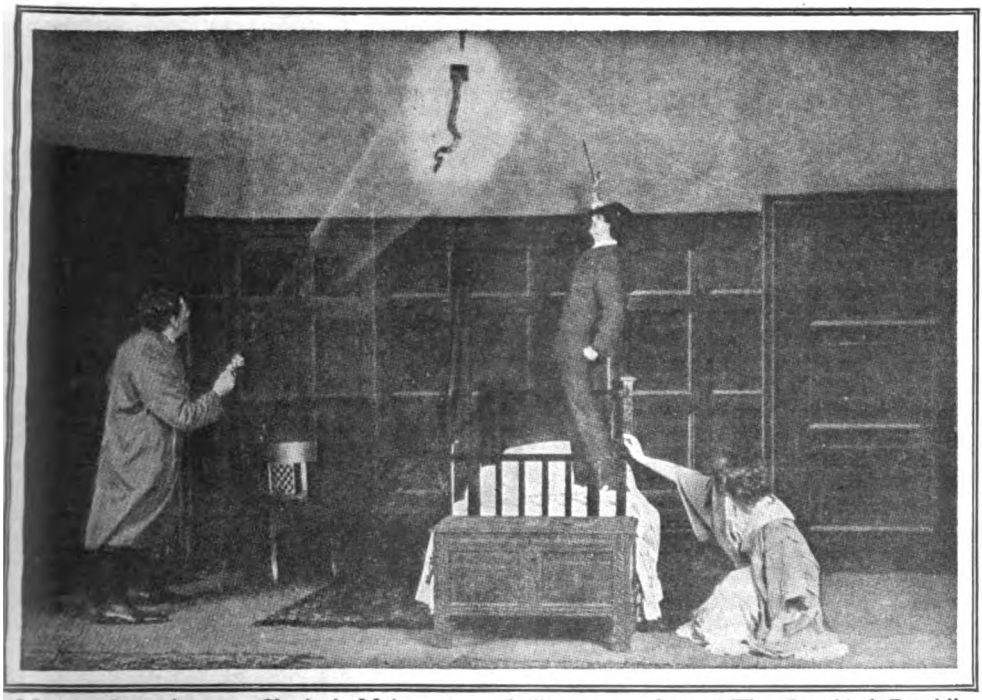
The impression that Holmes was a real person of flesh and blood may have been intensified by his frequent appearance upon the stage. After the withdrawal of my dramatization of "Rodney Stone" from a theatre upon which I held a six months' lease I determined to play a bold and energetic game, and certainly I never played a bolder. When I saw the course that things were taking I shut myself up and devoted my whole mind to making a sensational Sherlock Holmes drama. I wrote it in a week and called it "The Speckled Band," after the short story of that name. I do not think that I exaggerate if I say that within a fortnight of the one play shutting down I had a company working upon the rehearsals of a second one, which had been written in the interval. It was a considerable success. Lyn Harding, as the half epileptic and wholly formidable Dr. Grimesby Rylott, was most masterful, while

Saintsbury as Sherlock Holmes was also very good. Before the end of the run I had cleared off all that I had lost upon the boxing play, and I had created a permanent property of some value. It became a stock piece and is even now touring the country.

We had a fine rock boa to play the title-*rôle*, a snake which was the pride of my heart, so one can imagine my disgust when I saw that one critic ended his disparaging review by the words, "The crisis of the play was produced by the appearance of a palpably artificial serpent." I was inclined to offer him a goodly sum if he would undertake to go to bed with it. We had several snakes at different times, but they were none of them born actors and they were all inclined either to hang down from the hole in the wall like inanimate bell-pulls, or else to turn back through the hole and get even with the stage carpenter, who pinched their tails in order to make them more lively. Finally we used artificial snakes, and everyone, including the stage carpenter, agreed that it was more satisfactory.

H. A. Saintsbury, who has played Sherlock Holmes many hundreds of times.

This was the second Sherlock Holmes play. I should have spoken about the first, which was produced very much earlier—in fact, at the time of the African war. It was written and most wonderfully acted by William Gillette, the famous American. Since he used my characters and to some extent my plots, he naturally gave me a share in the undertaking, which proved to be very successful. "May I marry Holmes?" was one cable which I received from him when in the throes of composition. "You may marry or murder or do what you like with him," was my heartless reply. I was charmed both with the play, the acting, and the pecuniary result. I think that every man with a drop of artistic blood in his veins would agree that the latter consideration, though very welcome when it does arrive, is still the last of which he thinks.



H. A. Saintsbury as Sherlock Holmes in a thrilling scene from "The Speckled Band."

SIR JAMES BARRIE'S PARODY.

It is known to but few that Sir James Barrie paid his respects to Sherlock Holmes in the rollicking parody now printed for the first time. It was really a gay gesture of resignation over the failure which he had encountered with a comic opera for which he undertook to write the libretto. I collaborated with him on this, but in spite of our joint efforts the piece fell flat. Whereupon Barrie sent me a parody on Holmes, written on the fly-leaves of one of his books. It ran thus :—

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TWO COLLABORATORS.

In bringing to a close the adventures of my friend Sherlock Holmes I am perforce reminded that he never, save on the occasion which, as you will now hear, brought his singular career to an end, consented to act in any mystery which was concerned with persons who made a livelihood by their pen.

"I am not particular about the people I mix among for business purposes," he would say, "but at literary characters I draw the line."

We were in our rooms in Baker Street one evening. I was (I remember) by the centre table writing out "The Adventure of the Man Without a Cork Leg" (which had so puzzled the Royal Society and all the other scientific bodies of Europe), and Holmes was amusing himself with a little revolver practice. It was his custom of a summer evening to fire round my head, just shaving my face, until he had made a photograph of me on the opposite wall, and it is a slight proof of his skill that many of these portraits in pistol shots are considered admirable likenesses.

I happened to look out of the window, and, perceiving two gentlemen advancing rapidly along Baker Street, asked him who they were. He immediately lit his pipe, and, twisting himself on a chair into the figure 8, replied :—

William Gillette, the famous American actor, who scored a great success both here and in the States as the famous detective

"They are two collaborators in comic opera, and their play has not been a triumph."

I sprang from my chair to the ceiling in amazement, and he then explained :—

"My dear Watson, they are obviously men who follow some low calling. That much even you should be able to read in their faces. Those little pieces of blue paper which they fling angrily from them are Durrant's Press Notices. Of these they have obviously hundreds about their person (see how their pockets bulge). They would not dance on them if they were pleasant reading."

I again sprang to the ceiling (which is much dented) and shouted: "Amazing! But they may be mere authors."

"No," said Holmes, "for mere authors only get one Press notice a week. Only criminals, dramatists, and actors get them by the hundred."

"Then they may be actors."

"No; actors would come in a carriage."

"Can you tell me anything else about them?"

"A great deal. From the mud on the boots of the tall one I perceive that he comes from South Norwood. The other is as obviously a Scotch author."

"How can you tell that?"

"He is carrying in his pocket a book called (I clearly see) 'Auld Licht Something.' Would anyone but the author be likely to carry about a book with such a title?"

I had to confess that this was improbable.

It was now evident that the two men (if such they can be called) were seeking our lodgings. I have said (often) that my friend Holmes seldom gave way to emotion of any kind, but he now turned livid with passion. Presently this gave place to a strange look of triumph.

"Watson," he said, "that big fellow has for years taken the credit for my most remarkable doings, but at last I have him—at last!"

Up I went to the ceiling, and when I returned the strangers were in the room.

"I perceive, gentlemen," said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, "that you are at present afflicted by an extraordinary novelty."

The handsomer of our visitors asked in amazement how he knew this, but the big one only scowled.

"You forget that you wear a ring on your fourth finger," replied Mr. Holmes, calmly.

I was about to jump to the ceiling when the big brute interposed.

"That Tommy-rot is all very well for the public, Holmes," said he, "but you can drop it before me. And, Watson, if you go up to the ceiling again I shall make you stay there."

John Barrymore — another American Sherlock Holmes.

Here I observed a curious phenomenon. My friend Sherlock Holmes *shrank*. He became small before my eyes. I looked longingly at the ceiling, but dared not.

"Let us cut the first four pages," said the big man, "and proceed to business. I want to know why——"

"Allow me," said Mr. Holmes, with some of his old courage. "You want to know why the public does not go to your opera."

"Exactly," said the other, ironically, "as you perceive by my shirt stud." He added more gravely: "And as you can only find out in one way I must insist on your witnessing an entire performance of the piece."

It was an anxious moment for me. I shuddered, for I knew that if Holmes went I should have to go with him. But my friend had a heart of gold. "Never," he cried, fiercely. "I will do anything for you save that."

"Your continued existence depends on it," said the big man, menacingly.

"I would rather melt into air," replied Holmes, proudly taking another chair. "But I can tell you why the public don't go to your piece without sitting the thing out myself."

"Why?"

"Because," replied Holmes, calmly, "they prefer to stay away."

A dead silence followed that extraordinary remark. For a moment the two intruders gazed with awe upon the man who had unravelled their mystery so wonderfully. Then drawing their knives——

Holmes grew less and less, until nothing was left save a ring of smoke which slowly circled to the ceiling.

The last words of great men are often noteworthy. These were the last words of Sherlock Holmes: "Fool, fool! I have kept you in luxury for years. By my help you have ridden extensively in cabs, where no author was ever seen before. *Henceforth you will ride in buses!*"

The brute sank into a chair aghast.

The other author did not turn a hair.

To A. Conan Doyle,
from his friend,
J. M. Barrie.

Dennis Neilson-Terry as Holmes in "The Crown Diamonds: An Evening with Sherlock Holmes."

This parody, the best of all the numerous parodies, may be taken as an example not only of the author's wit, but of his debonair courage, for it was written immediately after our joint failure, which at the moment was a bitter thought for both of us. There is, indeed, nothing more miserable than a theatrical failure, for you feel how many others who have backed you have been affected by it. It was, I am glad to say, my only experience of it, and I have no doubt that Barrie could say the same.

Before I leave the subject of the many impersonations of Holmes I may say that all of them,

and all the drawings, are very unlike my own original idea of the man. I saw him as very tall—"over six feet, but so excessively lean that he seemed considerably taller," said "A Study in Scarlet." He had, as I imagined him, a thin, razor-like face, with a great hawk's-bill of a nose, and two small eyes set close together on either side of it. Such was my conception. It chanced, however, that poor Sidney Paget, who, before his premature death, drew all the original pictures, had a younger brother, whose name, I think, was Harold, who served him as a model. The handsome Harold took the place of the more powerful but uglier Sherlock, and perhaps from the point of view of my lady readers it was as well. The stage has followed the type set up by the pictures.

Films, of course, were unknown when the stories appeared, and when these rights were finally discussed and a small sum offered for them by a French company it seemed treasure trove, and I was very glad to accept. Afterwards I had to buy them back again at exactly ten times what I had received, so the deal was a disastrous one. But now they have been done by the Stoll Company with Eille Norwood as Holmes, and it was worth all the expense to get so fine a production. Norwood has since played the part on the stage and won the approbation of the London public. He has that rare quality which can only be described as glamour, which compels you to watch an actor eagerly even when he is doing nothing. He has the brooding eye which excites expectation, and he has also a quite unrivalled power of disguise. My only criticism of the films is that they introduce telephones, motor-cars, and other luxuries of which the Victorian Holmes never dreamed.

Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes in a scene from the play at the Princes Theatre, London.

The photograph shows the making of a wax model of Holmes with which the famous detective traps his great rival.

(*To be continued.*)

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—9.

The BORGIA TOUCH

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

THE whole Riviera from Hyères to Monaco lay basking in a glorious flood of spring sunshine. From her balcony Judith leaned, in an exquisite *négligé*, and sang joyfully the strain of the Neapolitan ditty which was then the air of the moment in the *cafés*—a song of love, and flowers, and passion. She looked over her shoulder and called back through the French windows :—

"Hurry, Joseph! I've something to show you."

Londe presently appeared. He had not finished dressing, and he wore a silk dressing gown, a gorgeous purple-coloured garment, with an embroidered girdle about his waist. He turned his face seaward for a moment and drew in a long breath of the lemon-scented air. Afterwards he looked down at the little quay, close to which a yacht lay at anchor.

"The south wind has gone, then," he observed, with satisfaction. "I like it better when the *Judith* lies close at hand."

"Pooh!" she laughed. "You never forget."

He turned and seated himself at the round breakfast table, whose dainty appurtenances glittered in the sunlight.

"Well, what is it you want to show me?" he asked, absently, watching the curve of Judith's white arm as she lifted the coffee-pot.

With the other hand she pushed an illustrated paper across to him, and pointed proudly to the open page.

"Me!" she exclaimed. "What do you think of me, Joseph? Am I not beautiful?"

He stared at the full-length picture for a moment, blankly. It was a photograph of Judith, taken at a happy moment—Judith exquisitely gowned, brilliant, happy. A man in tennis clothes was standing talking to her. It was entitled, "Mrs. Broadbent and the Vicomte d'Aix on the tennis courts at Monte Carlo."

"You let them take this?" he muttered, jumping up and staring at the picture with fascinated eyes.

"Why not?" she answered, happily. "See how beautiful I look, Joseph. It was a Poiret gown. And the lace hat—Elise says herself that no one can wear those hats as I do."

"How shall you like to wear the asylum clothes again?" he asked, roughly.

"Asylum! Joseph, don't be horrible!" she protested.

"I mean it," he insisted, his voice shaking with suppressed anger. "Coarse flannel next your skin, a bath with yellow soap once a week, and a serge covering like a sack to wrap around your body."

She began to sob. She was like a child who has been scolded.

"Don't you suppose they'll see that picture in London, and know that we are back in Monte Carlo?" he went on, bluntly. "Don't you remember that we have enemies, the business of whose life it is to track us down? Worton, through whom I might have been a sane man at this moment, if you hadn't interfered, with your accursed susceptibility; Worton and the grubbing cipher-reader, who escaped at the last moment, and the girl who had a father. Don't you know they are hunting for us, all of them? They are fools, but even fools blunder into

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

success sometimes. They were here looking for us only in January, because of that affair of the young man. We have had a rest—two months, practically in hiding. Now, directly we get back again where there are some interests in life for me, you beckon to them, back in England, to come and start the chase again. You fool! Can't you realize that there isn't one of them who won't recognize that picture? Your brain must be shrivelling day by day."

She sprang away from him. Her beautiful eyes were still wet with tears and her lips quivering.

"I am very sorry, Joseph," she sobbed. "You know that sometimes I don't think. It seems to get more difficult every day, and I cannot remember. Of course it was very foolish of me. That awful place! It comes back to me now. Horrible! Horrible!"

She wrung her hands. He contemplated her with gloomy satisfaction. Her agony pleased him.

"You're getting worse," he pronounced. "You're getting more childish every day. The world fades away from you."

"It is true," she faltered. "There are times when I cannot think, when I feel the clouds coming. Save me, Joseph! You are so clever. You can do something!"

He remained motionless and thoughtful.

"Nobody can do anything for you," he pronounced, pitilessly. "Your days for thought are past. You must cling to the sensations of the moment. Make the best of them, for there is nothing else in life for you. If, by any chance," he added, "they get you back again through this"—he touched the picture—"and they take away all your soft clothes and luxuries, you will be a screaming lunatic in a week."

"Don't let them take me, Joseph," she pleaded. "Don't let them!"

He sat with clenched fists, gazing over the Mediterranean, seeing nothing of its gorgeous patches of blue, the pools of light, and glittering jewel-strewn sheen. He tasted the whole bitterness of foreknowledge.

"Of what account are you, after all?" he muttered. "Here am I, a different order of being altogether. Fit for any position in the world, save for that one tiny clot of madness, one evil pin-prick, which nothing can move. I could be a master of science. I have all the knowledge those others strive for. I have vision. I was made to be their master. And here I am all the time dodging fate, with the cunning of a lunatic, waiting for the hand upon my shoulder, the grim sentence of my fellows! I, their chief, the lord of all knowledge!"

She was almost in hysterics now.

"Don't let them take me, Joseph!" she cried, again and again.

He pointed to the paper.

"You!" he muttered. "What do you matter? A butterfly without a soul, a thing of beauty, all husk and show, risking hell for both of us to gratify your vanity."

"I didn't think, indeed I didn't think," she pleaded. "The camera-man was there. It was all over before I could turn."

He waved her away. He was thinking again.

"They will be here directly," he reflected. "The bespectacled pedant—a fool still, but getting wiser with the experience of many failures—the girl with the angry eyes, and the aristocratic policeman. They are none of them very clever, but they will get us some day. They hang on. They will be here, perhaps this morning."

"You are cleverer than they are, Joseph," she moaned. "You always win. There is the car ready, the yacht, or shall we fly? We can fly from Nice."

"My time for winning draws near to an end," he declared, with a somewhat ominous note of prophecy in his tone. "I have heard the warning. I have heard the footsteps amongst the hills, the footsteps upon wool, passing over the hills, coming downwards, always downwards. What have I done evil? I, who saved thousands of lives. It is that missing atom of brain. If I had that I should know."

"I was a fool," she moaned.

Suddenly the villa gates swung to. The sound of horses' hoofs reached their ears from the drive. She lifted her head eagerly, expectantly. All the gloom and sorrow had passed. She clapped her hands.

"It is Armand," she cried. "It is the Vicomte. How beautifully he rides, and what a lovely horse!"

Londe rose to his feet.

"Amuse yourself with him for a time," he advised. "I must go and think. I must decide whether we disappear or face the storm."

ANN stepped off the train at Monte Carlo with fifty pounds in her pocket, a single trunk containing in chief her two evening gowns, one afternoon toilette, and a revolver. She engaged a room at a small hotel, took out her tickets for the Salon Privé and the Sporting Club, and paid a visit to an official of the place. He received her politely, but without enthusiasm.

"You will not know my name," she said, "but I am, as a matter of fact, the advanced guard of a small Commission who are coming out here to try to effect the arrest of a

dangerous criminal whom we believe to be living in the place."

It was an unfortunate start. Officials at Monte Carlo do not like to be told that their Principality could possibly harbour members of the criminal fraternity.

"Indeed, mademoiselle!" was the civil but cold response. "Perhaps you can tell me the names of the members of this Commission to which you allude?"

"One is Sir Francis Worton," she replied, "who is the head of the Home Branch of the English Secret Service. He is bringing an emissary from Scotland Yard with him, and there is also another gentleman, Mr. Daniel Rocke, a friend of Sir Francis."

"Do you know the name of this supposed criminal?" the official asked.

"He passes under the name of Broadbent," she confided. "His wife's picture was in the *Tatler* this week."

Her companion smiled a little superciliously.

"It happens," he remarked, "that we have recently investigated the antecedents of the gentleman in question. We discovered nothing against him. Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent are very valued and welcome visitors to the Principality."

Ann frowned.

"That man who calls himself Broadbent is a murderer and a lunatic," she declared. "He was responsible for the death of one young man here a few months ago. We came over then directly we read about the case, but both Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent had disappeared."

"Mademoiselle," the official said, patiently, "the circumstances concerning the death of that young man have been fully inquired into. There is not the slightest foundation for the statement which you have just made."

"You let them take this?" he muttered, staring at the picture with fascinated eyes.

Ann checked a somewhat hasty reply.

"Why did they leave the place, then, the day after the young man's suicide?" she demanded.

"Their leaving the place was a perfectly natural happening," was the civil but cold rejoinder. "Mrs. Broadbent was naturally very much upset, and the doctor ordered her an immediate change. As to their being in hiding, they were, I believe, in Rome the whole of the time. I remember now that one of the gentlemen of whom you have been speaking came to make inquiries here. We told him then that we could discover nothing against either this gentleman or his wife. They have come back here quite openly, and until official representations are

made to me, I shall do nothing to interfere with their comfort."

"Will you permit me, sir, to tell you the history of this man and his wife?" Ann persisted.

"Another time, mademoiselle," was the somewhat impatient answer. "There are demands upon me this morning."

"The man has been in a lunatic asylum," she declared, indignantly. "He has committed three murders."

"These incidents do not appear in the *dossier* of James Broadbent which we have," the official assured her, smiling. "Mademoiselle, you will permit me to wish you good morning. I will receive your friends when they arrive, if they should care to pay me a visit."

Ann was repulsed. For the first time she doubted the wisdom of the instinct which had made her leave London at a moment's notice, upon seeing the picture. Daniel, as it chanced, had been away in Somersetshire, Sir Francis was in Ireland, and no one at Scotland Yard was willing to move without more definite information than she was able to give. She had sent off desperate telegrams, and herself caught the first possible train. Now that she was here it seemed that there was nothing she could do. For the first time, too, she appreciated the almost brilliant cunning of the man who had escaped them so often, who did not even take a pseudonym with which he was not prepared to link a perfectly connected and irreproachable past. She was inclined to be depressed as she walked disconsolately through the clean, attractive streets. She had some idea of going back to her hotel. Then a seat outside the Café de Paris, a smiling waiter, her favourite air from "Thaïs," played by the red-coated band, decided her fate. She sat down and ordered a Dubonnet, herself becoming one of the gay throng. And at the next table sat Londe!

HE was seated sideways to her, a little turned away, and she realized from the first the futility of any attempt at escape. She was content to study him for a few minutes. He was perfectly dressed, in the negligent fashion of the place, in well-fitting grey tweeds, grey Homburg hat, and brown shoes. His beard was carefully trimmed, his complexion and alert manner showed no signs of decadence, nor of evil conscience. His tie was fastened by a single pearl pin. He was talking eagerly and forcefully to his two companions, men of middle age and professional appearance, who seemed to listen to him with the utmost respect. They were speaking in French, and, so far as Ann could gather, of some abstruse scientific subject. She listened in wonder to Londe's unhesitating stream of conversation, his accent and gestures. He was evidently holding forth on some subject on which he was an authority. Then suddenly, without any warning, he turned round in his chair and looked her full in the face. He rose at once to his feet and bowed courteously. There was no shadow of embarrassment or disturbance in his manner.

"My dear young lady!" he exclaimed. "This is most delightful—a charming surprise. Permit me to present Monsieur le Professeur Trenchard, of Paris. Docteur Coppet, the resident physician here. Miss Ann Lancaster."

Londe's manner was perfect. There was no escape, scarcely an alternative. In less than a minute Ann found herself seated between the other two men, her glass of Dubonnet replenished, the guest of the man who had killed her father, the man whom she knew to be a lunatic with death always at his finger-tips—the man whom she had come to destroy.

"You are fortunate in your acquaintance with Mr. Broadbent," Docteur Coppet remarked to her in an undertone. "He is certainly one of the most brilliant men of the day. Professeur Trenchard has travelled all the way from Paris to see him, after studying a paper of his on 'comparative lunacy.'"

"I have heard that he was an authority on the subject," Ann murmured.

"The greatest—I should say the greatest," the doctor confided, enthusiastically. "It is a privilege to have been able to make his acquaintance here."

Londe brought his scientific discussion to an abrupt conclusion and turned courteously to Ann.

"Are your friends—er—with you, Miss Lancaster?" he inquired.

"Not yet," she answered. "They are following—perhaps to-morrow."

"I see," he murmured. "You are here for the purpose of making preliminary investigations."

"Precisely."

"And you expect them to-morrow, did I understand you to say?"

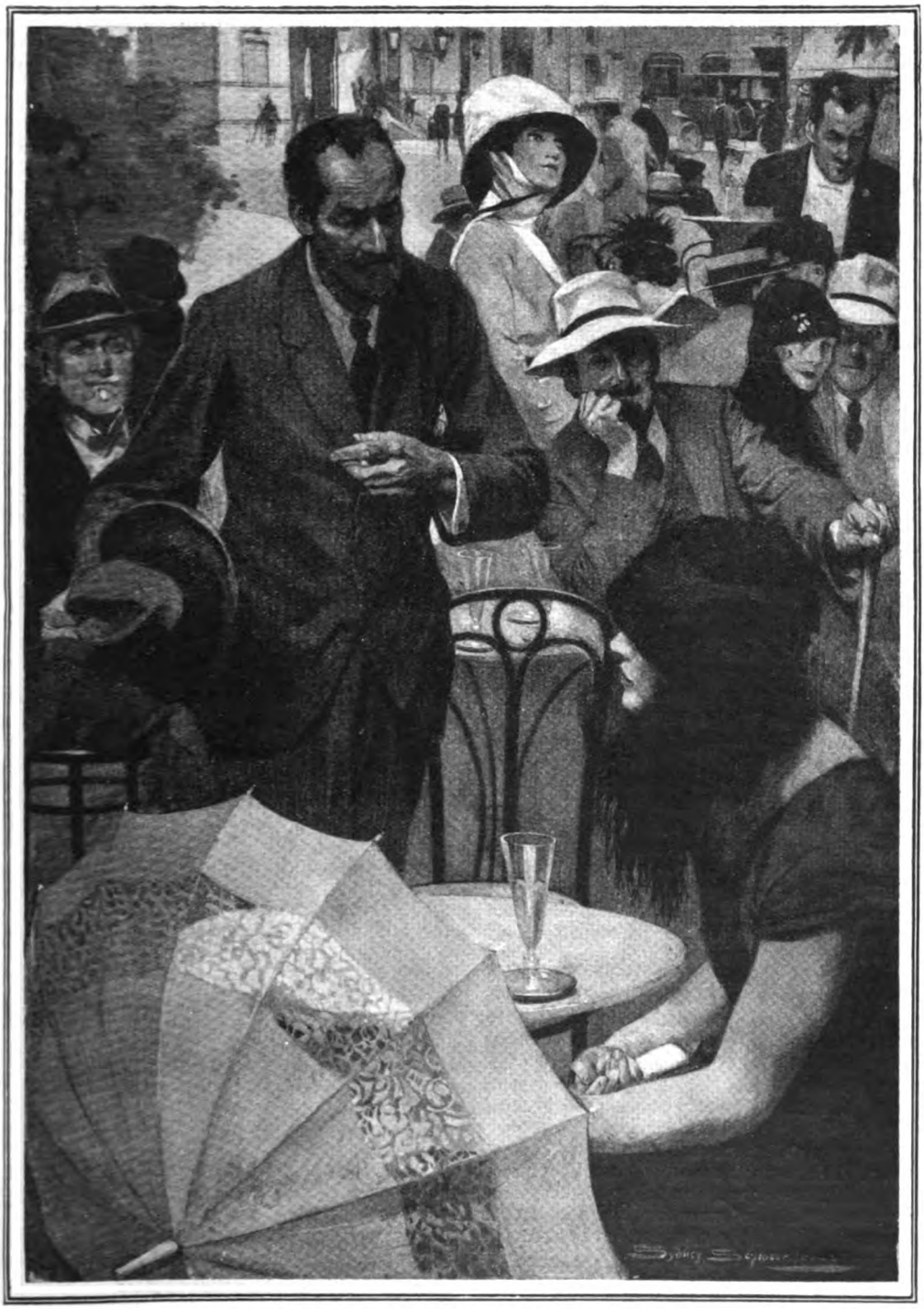
"They may be delayed until the next day," she replied. "They are certainly coming."

"And in the meantime you are alone?"

"I am alone," Ann admitted.

"You must dine with us to-night at the Villa," Londe suggested. "I am sure my wife will be charmed."

The sound of music and the gay voices around seemed suddenly to die away. She felt herself struggling in the throes of a horrible nightmare. It seemed incredible



Londe rose at once and bowed courteously. "My dear young lady!" he exclaimed. "This is most delightful—a charming surprise."

that this man, the horror of her life, should be sitting here, mixing with his fellow-creatures, light-heartedly, with dignity, and even condescension, that he should be asking her without the slightest sign of hesitation to accept his hospitality. It was grotesque and terrifying.

"I am afraid——" she began.

"I shall take no refusal," Londe interrupted, cheerfully. "To-night, as it happens, we entertain a little company of friends. Monsieur le Professeur, Monsieur le Docteur here, the Vicomte d'Aix—well, there may be others, but of these I know. We certainly shall not leave you alone at your hotel."

"My experience of your hospitality——" she began, trying not to tremble.

He laughed at her.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "life is a great game, and to taste its full savour one should be prepared for the unexpected, one should have the courage always to face it. You shall be fetched at eight o'clock by the Vicomte d'Aix. He is a harmless youth who adores my wife. He shall also conduct you home. May I know at what hotel?"

"The St. James's," she murmured.

"It is arranged," Londe declared, rising to his feet.

A moment later she was wondering whether it was not a dream. Three distinguished-looking men—Londe himself, perhaps, with his burly frame and assured air, the most noticeable—were strolling away towards a waiting motor-car. She watched him—the central figure—with absorbing curiosity. He was apparently well known. A gendarme saluted, a lady bowed, a man and woman waved their salute from across the road. He bore himself with dignity—almost with condescension—her father's murderer, a lunatic criminal, a man who had baffled the police a dozen times and to secure whom they were even now rushing hot-foot across France. She herself had travelled without food or sleep to urge the police on to his track. And he apparently welcomed her with pleasure, had asked her to dine at the Villa, had behaved with the courtesy of a man of the world, had ignored with the most perfect diplomacy the blood feud which lay between them!

The remainder of the day passed restlessly. There came no word from Daniel at the hotel, not even the telegram she had expected to let her know that he had started. At seven o'clock she changed into the more impressive of her simple evening toilettes. She made up her mind that if the Vicomte called for her she would go. She would leave word at the office where she was, and if there were no other guests she would decline to stay. There could be no risk. The Vicomte was a well-known young Frenchman of fashion. She would go with him and return with him. Even Daniel could not disapprove, and she would be able to spy out the land. She would be able to decide whether his attitude was a magnificent bluff, or whether it were really his intention to stand firm, to entrench himself behind his great fame, and risk the whole truth becoming known.

At eight o'clock she descended to the lounge, and a few minutes later a very elegantly turned-out young man, whom she recognized by his picture as the Vicomte, entered and, after looking around, approached her, hat in hand.

"I have the honour to address Mademoiselle Lancaster?" he inquired.

"That is my name," she admitting, rising. "I suppose you are the Vicomte d'Aix?"

He bowed low.

"I have the privilege to escort you to the Villa Violette," he announced.

"I am quite ready," she replied.

So far he was entirely canonical. She took her place by his side in the small but luxurious limousine. They drove off in silence.

"You are very well acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent?" Ann inquired, presently.

"I can scarcely call myself an old friend," he admitted, "but I visit them a great deal. I think that Mme. Broadbent is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life."

"I shall be interested to meet her again," Ann observed.

"She is like a beautiful flower unfolding a little farther every day," the young man continued, enthusiastically. "She is entrancing."

"How do you get on with her husband?" Ann asked, bluntly.

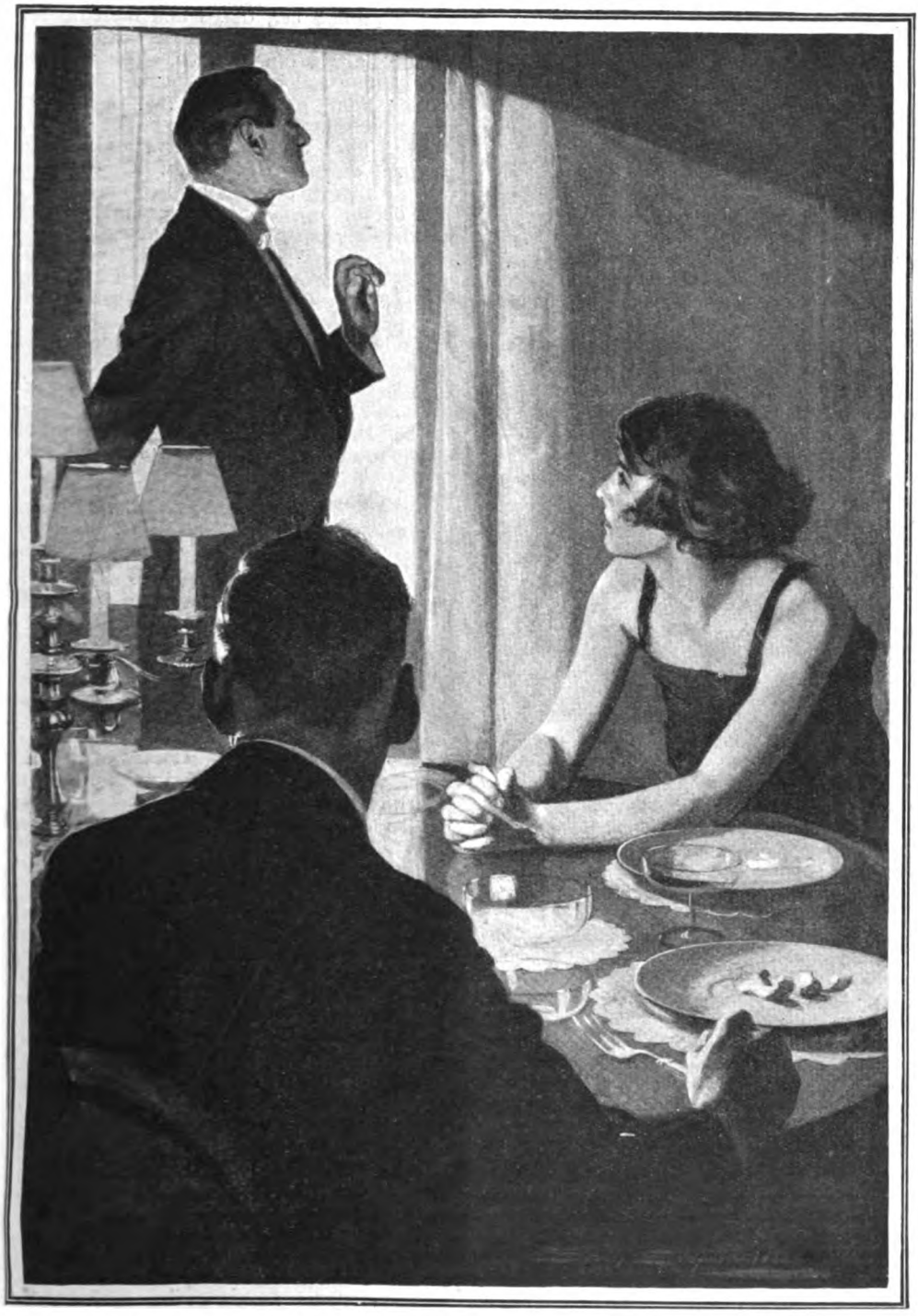
The young man's attitude showed that he regarded the question as not being altogether in the best of taste.

"Monsieur Broadbent is a man of science," he pointed out. "I respect him greatly. We are not on intimate terms. I do not call him my friend."

"Do you know whether they are leaving Monte Carlo soon?" his companion inquired.

"I have heard no mention of their doing so," the Vicomte replied. "I trust not."

At the Villa they were received with some ceremony. A butler welcomed them in the hall. Two other menservants were in evidence. An irreproachable-looking maid took charge of Ann. The whole atmosphere of the place was normal. In the little drawing-room her last apprehensions vanished. The Professeur from Paris was



The sunlight was shining full into the room, giving a strange impression of debauchery to the remains of the dessert, the half-filled wine glasses.

already there, the local doctor, Londe and his wife.

Ann gave a little gasp as she shook hands with her hostess. The Vicomte had not exaggerated. Judith, in her gown of pale blue velvet, a rope of pearls around her neck, her beautiful hair becomingly arranged, youth and health alight in her face, was indescribable. She seemed scarcely more than twenty-five years of age, and she had the conquering presence of a woman at whose feet the world lay. Her welcome to Ann was kindly but indifferent. She had the air of never having seen her before. They went in to dinner almost at once.

For ever afterwards that meal remained a hazy memory with Ann. Its appurtenances were all, of their kind, perfect—the lighting, the food, the wine, the noiseless service. One or other of the guests talked to her and she replied, glibly enough, but mechanically. She could not keep her eyes away from Londe. He was at once the perfect host, the savant, the courtier. He kept Professeur Trenchard interested, at times almost excited, yet he never allowed the general conversation to flag. He dropped a valuable hint to the doctor as to one of his cases, explained minutely the only safe system at roulette by the use of which heavy loss was impossible, and smilingly acknowledged that his own large winnings were solely a matter of chance, that he had not the patience himself to play upon any system at all. The meal drew to an end. At Londe's request coffee and liqueurs were served at the table. With only two women, he suggested, an adjournment was unsociable. A little haze of cigarette smoke hung around the table. Conversation grew louder at one end, softer at the other. The Vicomte was leaning towards Judith. Her eyes shone like brilliant but unspeaking stars through the haze. . . . And then Ann was suddenly conscious that she was struggling against a curiously potent sense of sleepiness. The voices around her died away, became louder again, and then receded like the waves of the sea. Her eyes ached, her head drooped. She felt herself mumbling an apology. She lurched a little forward. Once more the voices had gone. There was silence—relief.

THE awakening was the most wonderful thing she had ever known. It came suddenly and without a start, just as though she had opened her eyes after a long night's sleep in her own bed. She sat up and looked around her, dazed and incredulous. The most amazing thing of all was that she was still at the dinner table. The sunlight was shining full into the room, paling the electric light, giving a strange impression of debauchery to the remains of the dessert, the half-filled wine and liqueur glasses, the cigarette ashes on the plates. Opposite to her, as though aroused by her movement, the doctor opened his eyes and gazed wonderingly around. The Professeur followed suit. The Vicomte, with a little groan, staggered to his feet. Only two places at the table were empty—the places of Londe and his wife.

"Why, it's morning," the Vicomte exclaimed, with pitiful inadequacy.

"What is this thing which has happened to us all?" the Professeur cried.

Then they saw a piece of paper in front of Londe's place. The Professeur seized and read it aloud :—

> *"The Borgias provided sometimes strange entertainment for their guests. We, of the modern world, follow mildly in their footsteps. Both my wife and I, hating farewells, have chosen this means of bidding all our friends adieu, and to the Professeur particularly I bequeath this memory of the dreamless night which I trust he will spend, an example of the drug we were discussing this afternoon.—'Tartuffe.'"*

The Professeur was a man of science first and a human being afterwards. His mind was entirely occupied with his own sensations.

"It is amazing," he declared. "I must have gone off to sleep in ten seconds. I had no dreams. I have slept like a child."

"I have certainly lost some patients," the doctor grumbled. "It is eight o'clock, and I may have been wanted a dozen times. A foolish joke!"

"Joke!" the Vicomte repeated, miserably. "Mon Dieu! If it is true that they have gone I am a broken man."

Ann threw open the French windows. A little breath of flower-scented breeze swept in, mingled with the flavour of the sea. On the horizon the white hull of a yacht glittered in the sunshine. She pointed towards it.

"There is the real humour of the situation," she cried, bitterly. "The worst of it is that no one but myself can appreciate it."

The butler threw open the door.

"*Le petit déjeuner* is served upon the terrace, madame et messieurs," he announced.

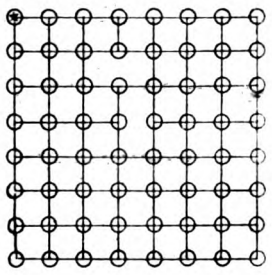
(The final story in this thrilling series will appear next month.)

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

680.—A MOTOR-RIDE PUZZLE.

SOMETIMES the introduction of an apparently trivial new condition will make an easy puzzle quite perplexing. Here is an example. The diagram represents a map of Puzzleland with sixty-four towns connected by the only available roads. A man, setting out from the town marked with a star, wishes to visit every town once and once only in sixteen straight runs, ending at the starting-point. This would not be difficult except for the fact that two little roads near the centre are omitted, because they are not available, being under repair. How is the feat to be performed?



681.—THE QUEEN AND THE KNIGHT.

A WHITE queen and a black knight are placed at hazard on the chessboard. What are the odds that neither piece will be so placed that it can take the other? Some will guess that the chances must be greatly in favour of one piece attacking the other, while some will take quite the contrary view. What are the exact probabilities?

682.—A COMMON DIVISOR.

HERE is a puzzle that has lately been the subject of frequent inquiries by correspondents, only, of course, the actual figures are varied considerably. A country newspaper states that many schoolmasters have suffered in health in their attempts to master it! Perhaps this is merely a little journalistic exaggeration, for it is really a very simple question if only you have the cunning to hit on the method of attacking it. This is the question: Find a common divisor for the three numbers, 480,608, 508,811, and 723,217, so that the remainder shall be the same in every case.

683.—A CHARADE.

My *first* is seen in every house
Where cleanly people live,
And patronized by all who love
But little toil to give.

My *next* the fond, admiring youth
Begs of his lady fair;
Receives it as a pledge of love,
And treasures it with care.

My *whole* forms part of what must tend
To sweeten your repose;
And brings my rhyme, charade, and all,
In one word to a close.

684.—A DIGITAL DIFFICULTY.

I AM frequently asked by correspondents to present occasionally a puzzle with a deferred solution and give acknowledgment to the reader who first sends in the correct answer. As a matter of fact, my solutions are on the press some time before the reader sees the puzzles to which they refer, which is the reason why I am not able to comment on the ingenious answers sometimes sent to me. The solution to the following little problem I shall withhold until some reader sends me the correct answer, and the first to do so will be duly credited with his skill.

Arrange the ten digits, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0, in such order that they shall form a number that may be divided by every number from 2 to 18 without in any case a remainder. As an example, if I arrange them thus, 1 2 7 4 9 5 3 6 8 0, this number can be divided by 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on up to 16, without any remainder, but it breaks down at 17.

CHRISTMAS PROBLEMS—SOLUTIONS.

POCKET MONEY.

WHEN he left home Tomkins must have had three shillings and sixpence in his pocket.

THE STAIRCASE RACE.

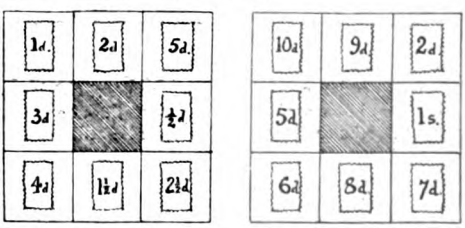
IF the staircase were such that each man would reach the top in a certain number of full leaps, without taking a reduced number at his last leap, the smallest possible number of risers would, of course, be 60 (that is, $3 \times 4 \times 5$). But the sketch showed us that A, taking three risers at a leap, has one odd step at the end; B, taking four at a leap, will have three only at the end; and C, taking five at a leap, will have four only at the finish. Therefore, we have to find the smallest number that, when divided by 3, leaves a remainder 1, when divided by 4 leaves 3, and when divided by 5 leaves a remainder 4. This number is 19. So there were 19 risers in all, only four being left out in the sketch.

THE COST OF A SUIT.

THE cost of Melville's suit was £6 15s., the coat costing £3 7s. 6d., the trousers £2 5s., and the vest £1 2s. 6d.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

THE smallest sum on the three sides is 8d., and the largest 1s. 9d., as here shown.

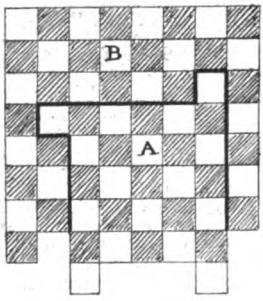


AN OLD ENIGMA.

THE word is BEDFELLOW, which exactly answers all the conditions.

MAKING A CHESSBOARD.

THE illustration shows how the linoleum may be cut into only two pieces so as to form a perfect chess-



board. Cut along the dark line. Then give piece A a quarter turn in a clockwise direction, and it will fit into B in a most satisfactory manner.

QUEER CHESS.

PLAY as follows :—

WHITE.	BLACK.
1. P—K B 3	1. P—K 3
2. K—B 2	2. Q—B 3
3. K—Kt 3	3. Q takes B P, ch.
4. K—R 4	4. B—K 2, checkmate.

THE CLOWN CLOCK.

THE time will be 3 hrs. $1\frac{4}{11}$ min. The minute-hand, on the wrong pinion, will thus have gone $16\frac{4}{11}$ minute points, while the hour-hand will have travelled $60 + 60 + 60 + 16\frac{4}{11} = 196\frac{4}{11}$ points. And $16\frac{4}{11}$ multiplied by 12 is $196\frac{4}{11}$. So the hands are together and the time indicated as stated.

THE NINE BARRELS.

THERE are 42 different arrangements. The positions of the 1 and 9 are fixed. Always place the 2 beneath the 1. Then, if the 3 be beneath the 2 there are 5 arrangements. If the 3 be to the right of the 1 there are 5 arrangements with 4 under the 2, 5 with 5 under the 2, 4 with 6 under 2, 2 with 7 under 2. We have thus 21 arrangements in all. But the 2 might have been always to the right of 1, instead of beneath, and then we get 21 reversed and reflected arrangements (practically similar), making 42 in all. Either the 4, 5, or 6 must always be in the centre.

THE SECRET OF THE "VANISHING LADY" ILLUSION.

(*See page* 61.)

THE proportions of the cabinet should be about 3ft. wide by 3ft. 6in. deep, and about 6ft. high. The curtains should be made of thin black material of the kind used by tailors for lining men's suits, and should be hooked *inside* the framework.

The cabinet thus constructed may be closely inspected without any clue to the trick being discovered. The simple, though not obvious, explanation is that the lady who enters the cabinet takes the necessary "apparatus" with her.

When the front curtain is drawn she takes from beneath her clothing a thin black curtain of the same material as the other curtains surrounding the cabinet, shakes out the folds, and hangs it up in front of her, as shown in the accompanying photograph.

The cabinet is then thrown open, and so long as she stands perfectly still behind this her presence cannot be detected. Provided the room is illuminated by artificial light, it is impossible to discern any difference in the size of the cabinet.

If the performer is a good showman, he will show the "empty" cabinet for a few seconds only, talking all the while, and then draw the curtain again.

The lady immediately rolls up the extra curtain (which occupies a very small space) and again conceals it on her person. Then she steps from the cabinet, makes her bow and her exit, and leaves the audience to resume their examination of the empty cabinet, and to puzzle out for themselves "how it is done."

H.G.WELLS PROPHESIES-

FEB 5 1924

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

A. CONAN DOYLE

P. G. WODEHOUSE · F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

E. P. OPPENHEIM · STACY AUMONIER · E

CLARNICO

CLARNICO

CHOCOLATE
LILY BRAZILS

The "very nice" sweet

9D.

per ¼ lb.

See that you are served from this box.

¶ There is a new palate sensation in store for you if you have not yet tasted this wonderful blend of sugar, cream, butter, nuts and very fine chocolate.

CLARNICO LILY BRAZILS

8D.

per ¼ lb.

¶ The same sweet but without the chocolate covering. Sold from this tin.

Get the Lily Brazils habit.

CLARKE NICKOLLS & COOMBS Ltd — L

LILY BRAZILS

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
February, 1924.

IN A FLASH I FLUNG MYSELF UPON HIM, WRENCHED AT HIS WRIST. HIS AWKWARD POSITION PUT HIM AT A DISADVANTAGE, BUT HE FOUGHT GRIMLY.

(See page 120.)

INTO THE BLUE

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

IT was in a bitterly pessimistic frame of mind that, having seen my baggage into the hotel, I went for a first walk along the asphalted esplanade of Southbeach. I had no pleasure in the baking sun, in the glittering stretch of the English Channel that veiled itself in a fine-weather mist all round the half-horizon. The exuberant, bold-eyed flappers, promenading in groups of three or four, the vivid polychromatism of their taste in sports-coats, seemed to me merely objectionable. The hordes of worthily respectable middle-class families complete with children—with many children—that blackened the sands and overflowed into the fringe of the water oppressed my soul with their formidable multitude, awoke in me a desperate craving for escape into utter solitude. The troupe of pierrots, that twanged, tinkled, and vociferated in chorus from the beach to the crowd that obstructed my passage along the esplanade, insulted me with a hideous mockery of enjoyment. I thought, in a savage emphasis of contrast, of the neat little yacht that should now be bearing me across the North Sea to the austere perfection of the Norwegian fiords. And I cursed myself for the childish imbecility of exasperation with which, when, at the last moment, with my suit-cases all packed, I had received a telegram informing me that the yacht had come off second-best in a collision with a coal-tramp, I had picked up "Bradshaw" and sworn to myself to go to whatever place I should blindly put my finger upon as I opened the page. The oracle had declared for Southbeach—Southbeach in mid-August! I shrugged my shoulders—so be it!—my holiday was spoilt anyhow. To Southbeach I would go. And now, as I contemplated it, I was appalled. What was I going to do with myself? A paddle excursion steamer came in to the pier, listing over with the black load aboard of her. Up and down the beach, in five-minute trips, a seaplane went roaring some eight hundred feet above the heads of the gaping crowd. I had done all the flying I wanted in the war, thank you very much. Other potentialities of amusement there were apparently none. If I could not discover a tolerably decent golf course, I was a lost man.

I am not going to give the chronicle of that first day. It would be a study in sheer boredom. That night, after one of those execrable dinners which are the peculiar production of an English seaside hotel, I had pretty well made up my mind that—oracle or no oracle—I would shake the sand of Southbeach off my feet on the morrow. Sitting over my coffee in the lounge, I was in fact already consulting the time-table for a morning train when my cogitations were suddenly interrupted by a violent slap on the shoulder.

"Hallo Jimmy!"

I looked up with a start, before my identification of the voice had time to complete itself.

"*Toby!*—Toby Selwyn!—by all that's splendid!" It was years since I had seen him, but in this dreary desert of uninteresting people he came like an angel of companionship and I welcomed him with delight. "Sit down, man. Have a drink!"

He did so, ordered a whisky-and-soda from the hovering waiter. I looked at him as one looks at an acquaintance of old times, seeking for changes. I had not seen him since the Armistice, when our squadron of fighting scouts was demobilized and a cheery crowd of dare-devil pilots was dispersed to the four quarters of the globe. He had not greatly altered. His face was a little thinner, more mature. His hair was still the same wild red mop. His eyes, peculiar in that when he opened them upon you you saw the whites all round the pupil, had still that strange look in them,

Copyright, 1924, by F. Britten Austin.

as though somewhere deep down in them his soul was like a caged animal, suspicious and restless, which I so well remembered. The reason for his nickname jumped back into my mind. It was from his little trick of suddenly and disconcertingly going "mad dog," not only when he swooped down, against any sort of odds, upon a covey of Huns, but in the mess. Someone had called him "mad dog"—it had been affectionately softened to "dog Toby"—"Toby" he remained.

"And what on earth are you doing here?" I asked.

He smiled grimly.

"Earning my living, old bean. Introducing all the grocers in England to the poetry of flying at ten bob a head."

"So that was *your* machine I saw going up and down the sea-front to-day?"

"It was. Five-minute trips—two bob a minute, and cheap at the price. Had to do something, you know. So I hit on this. There are worse things. Put my last cent into buying the machine—ex-Government, of course. She's a topping bus!" His voice freshened suddenly with enthusiasm. "It's almost a shame to use her for hacking up and down like this. You must come and have a look at her."

"Thanks," I replied, "I'd like to, but—"

OUR conversation was abruptly interrupted. Toby had jumped to his feet. Coming in through the door of the lounge was—miracles never happen singly!—an only too-familiar, smiling, middle-aged married-couple and—*Sylvia!* Toby obscured me from them for an instant as he went eagerly towards them—an instant where I weighed the problem of whether to stay or bolt. The last time Sylvia and I had met she had told me, with a pretty sympathy that ought to have softened the blow, that she would always be glad to have me as a *friend*, but—— The problem was resolved for me before I could decide. Toby was leading the trio up to me.

"I want to introduce an old pal of mine—Jimmy Esdaile."

Mr. and Mrs. Bryant shot a swift smile at each other and then to me as we shook hands. Sylvia almost grinned. I felt a perfect fool.

"Good evening, Mr. Esdaile," said Sylvia in her sweetest tones, her grey eyes demurely alight.

Mr. Esdaile! The last time it had still been "Jimmy." It is true that since I had somewhat boorishly informed her, upon that occasion, that I had no manner of use for being her *friend*, I had scarcely a legitimate grievance if now she chose to be frigid. There was nothing to do but to make the best of it.

"Won't you sit down, all of you?" I suggested. "Mr. Bryant, you'll take a Grand Marnier with your coffee, I know."

"Thanks, Jimmy, I will," said Mr. Bryant, seating himself. I saw Toby stare. His astonishment visibly increased as Mrs. Bryant, having comfortably disposed herself upon the settee, added in her motherly fashion: "And what in the world are *you* doing here, Jimmy?"

"That's what I'm asking myself——" I replied. Toby cut me short in what might have been a witty answer had I been allowed to finish it.

"You people know each other, then?" he demanded.

Mr. Bryant smiled.

"Yes. We've met Jimmy before—haven't we, Sylvia?"

"He used to be an acquaintance of ours in London," corroborated Sylvia imperturbably, delicately underlining the word "acquaintance."

Toby probed me with a peculiar look, suddenly almost hostile. I could guess that he was asking himself whether I had come to Southbeach in pursuit of Sylvia. One did not need to be a detective to discover his own eager interest in her. It was patent, with no attempt at concealment. Those strange, hungry, restless eyes of his seemed to devour her. Quite apart from any personal feelings—any time during the last six months I could have assured you, with perfect sincerity, that my heart was stone-dead—I didn't like it. Toby was not the sort of chap——

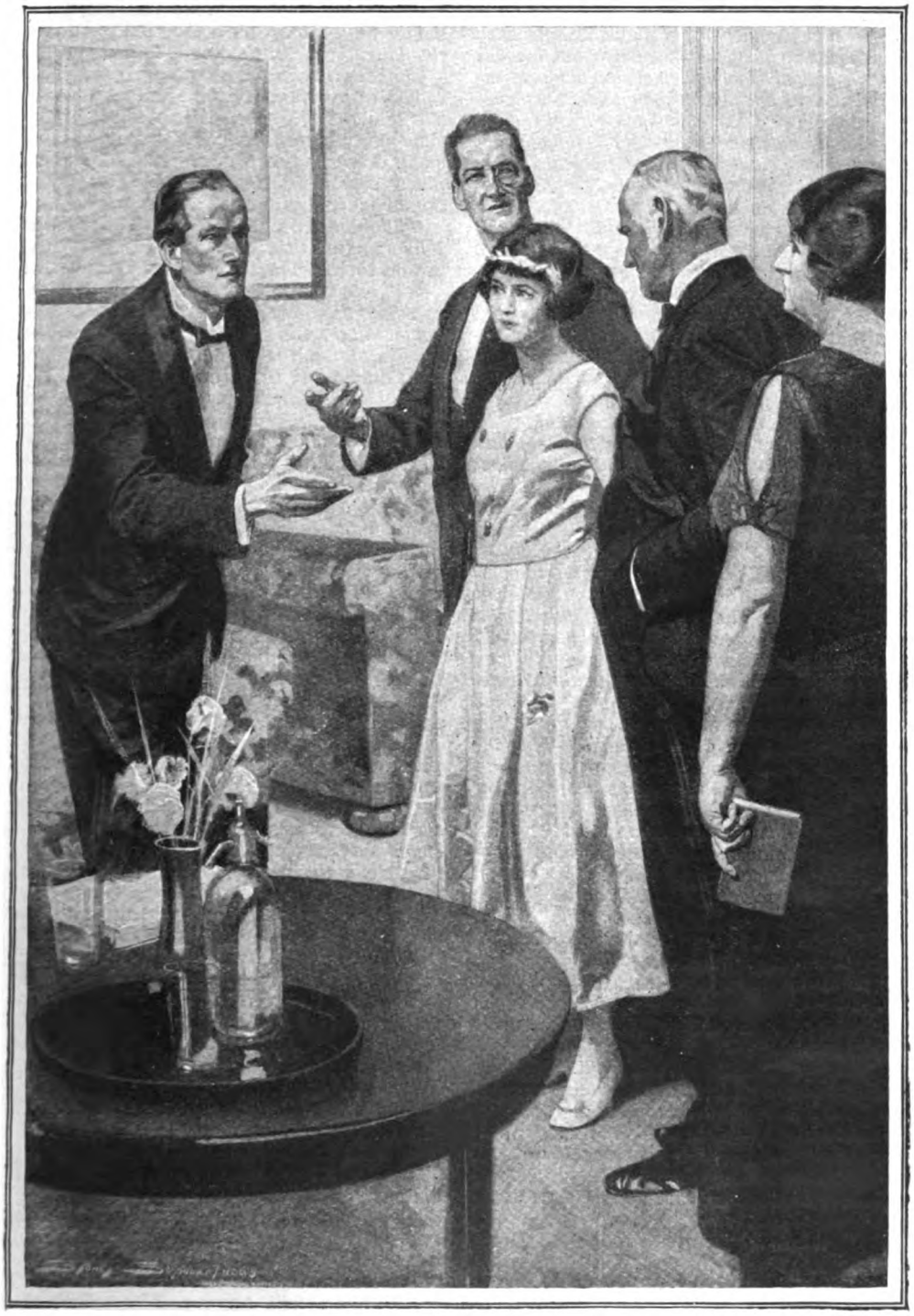
But I had no opportunity to intervene. Mr. and Mrs. Bryant, with a genuine kindly interest in me and my doings that at any other time I should have appreciated, monopolized me. And Sylvia flirted with him, demurely but outrageously. She called him "Toby" with the most natural ease in the world. He, poor devil, was awkward in an uncertainty whether she were playing with him, jerkily spasmodic in his answers, devouring her all the time with those strange eyes of his wherein I recognized that same caged-animal look familiar to me as a preliminary to an outburst of "mad dog" on those nights when there was ragging in the mess. She, I could see, was enjoying herself at playing with fire.

At last I could stand it no longer. I switched off from the amiable platitudes I was exchanging with her parents, interrupted her in her markedly exclusive conversation with him.

"I didn't know Toby was a friend of yours, Syl—Miss Bryant," I said.

She turned upon me eyes of perfect candour.

"Oh, yes, we have known Toby quite a



"I want to introduce an old pal of mine—Jimmy Esdaile."

long time—soon after you dropped us—nearly six months, isn't it, Toby ? "

She took, evidently, a malicious pleasure in reiterating his Christian name. I messed up the end of my cigarette before I remembered not to chew it. Toby looked up suspiciously.

" I had no idea either that you were a friend of the family, Esdaile," he said. He also had dropped the " Jimmy."

Sylvia answered for me.

" Not exactly a *close* friend," she said, sweetly. " Are you, Mr. Esdaile ? We had almost forgotten each other's existence."

I could have smacked her.

Toby looked immensely relieved. I could see that, for the moment at least, he definitely put certain doubts out of his mind. He seemed to be trying to make up for his spasm of hostility when next he spoke.

" He's an old pal of mine, anyway, aren't you, Jimmy ? It's like old times to see you again. D'you remember that little scrap with a dozen Huns over Charleroi ? That was a good finish-up—the day before the Armistice."

I REMEMBERED well enough—remembered that after that last fight, at the very end of the war, I had landed by a miracle with my nerve suddenly gone. I had never been in the air since—for a long time could not look at an aeroplane without a fit of trembling.

Sylvia glanced at me in surprise. The secret humiliation of that finish had made me pretty close about my war-doings.

" Oh, you two knew each other in the war, then ? " she said.

" I should rather think we did ! " replied Toby. " Jimmy was my squadron-leader—and he's some scientist in the air, let me tell you." His tone of admiration smote me like a bitter irony. " Don't forget you're coming to look over that bus of mine to-morrow morning, Jimmy."

" I don't know that I can," I replied. " I'm off back to town to-morrow." I said this with a glance to Sylvia which found her quite unmoved.

" Are you, really ? " she said. " What, on a *Sunday ?* " Her eyebrows went up in mocking admiration for my courage.

Confound it !—I remembered suddenly—to-morrow *was* Sunday. I can put up with any reasonable amount of hardship, but the prospect of a Sunday train on a South Coast railway—— !

" *Kamerad !* " I surrendered. " I go back on Monday."

" Good ! " said Toby. " The tender conscience of the local municipality does not permit them to allow me to earn my living on the Sabbath. To-morrow is a *dies non.* We'll spend the morning tinkering about the machine together. It'll be like old times, before we went up for a jolly old scrap with the Hun-bird. She's worth looking at, too—built for a radius of a thousand miles and a ceiling of over twenty thousand feet."

" Really ? " I said, with a touch of old-time professional interest. " But what on earth do you want a machine like that for ? She's surely scarcely suitable for giving donkey-rides up and down a beach ? "

" She does all right," replied Toby. " And I like to feel that I've got something with power to it. That I could if I wanted to ——" His curious, restless eyes lost expression, as though the soul behind them no longer saw me, contemplated something remote.

" Could what ? " I challenged him.

He came back to perception of my presence.

" Eh ? Oh, nothing." He looked at me with that familiar sudden suspiciousness which seemed to accuse one of attempted espionage into the secrets of his soul. I remembered that even in the mess, intimate as we had all been together, he had always been a queer chap. One had never really known what he was thinking or planning. He turned now to Sylvia. " Miss Bryant has promised me that one day she will let me take her for a flight," he said, banishing the hardness of his eyes with that little smile of his which was so peculiarly attractive when he chose to exert his charm.

" I'll come to-morrow," she replied, promptly. " And then you'll have to take me gratis."

" Of course I will ! " he answered, clutching at her promise with a flash of eager delight in his eyes. " You didn't imagine I was going to charge you for it, did you ? That's settled, then."

Mrs. Bryant interposed in motherly alarm.

" Oh, Sylvia ! Don't do any of your madcap tricks ! You *will* be careful, won't you, Mr. Selwyn ? " She turned to me. " Are you sure she will be safe with him, Jimmy ? "

" My dear Mrs. Bryant," I assured her, " if there is a better pilot in the world than Toby, I don't know him."

Mr. Bryant took the pipe from his mouth and glanced cautiously at his wife.

" I'd rather like to go up too," he said.

But Mrs. Bryant vetoed this volubly and emphatically.

" No, no, no ! " she exclaimed. " Not two of you together ! Suppose anything happened—— ! "

I smiled at her nervous fears.

" Nothing *will* happen, Mrs. Bryant—make your mind easy. Toby's perfectly safe. And if Mr. Bryant would like a flight

I'm sure Toby would be pleased to take him."

Toby was looking at Sylvia's father with his enigmatic eyes.

"Of course I will," he said. "But I don't want to worry Mrs. Bryant. I will take Mr. Bryant another time."

The conversation drifted off on to other topics. At last Mrs. Bryant rose for bed.

"And mind, Mr. Selwyn," she warned him, smilingly, as she shook hands with him, "I shall try hard to persuade Sylvia not to come."

"But you won't succeed, mother!" announced Sylvia, radiantly. "Good night, Toby. Good night, *Mr.* Esdaile!" With which parting shot she left us and the lounge was suddenly horribly empty.

WE sat there for yet some time, Toby and I, puffing at our pipes in silence. He leaned back on the settee, with his eyes closed. I was thinking—never mind what I was thinking, but my thoughts ranged far into the dreary future of my life. My glance fell on him, scrutinizing him, probing him, weighing him, as he lay there all unconscious of it. About his feelings I had no doubt. Were they reciprocated? I remembered that peculiarly attractive smile of his, the alluring touch of mystery about him—and almost hated him for them. That was the kind of thing which appealed to women, I reflected bitterly.

He opened his eyes.

"'*Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle,*'" he murmured to himself, staring as at a vision where this somewhat gaudy hotel-lounge had no place.

"What's that?" I said, not quite catching his words.

"Eh?" He looked at me as though he had forgotten my presence, was only now reminded of it by my voice. "Oh, that's the last line of the Purgatorio—where Dante, having drunk forgetfulness of the earth from Lethe, is ready to ascend with Beatrice into the stars of the Paradiso. All right, Jimmy," he added, with a smile of sardonic superiority which irritated me, "don't worry yourself with trying to understand. You won't. You're one of those whose idea of the fit habitation for the divine soul shining through the eyes of your beloved is a bijou residence in a London suburb. After a few years of you, your wife, whoever she is, will be another Mrs. Bryant."

"Many thanks!" I replied, somewhat nettled, and a little puzzled also. This was a new Toby. We were not given to cultivating poetry in our mess. "But since when have you taken to studying Dante in the original?"

"Oh, I've had plenty of time," he answered, his eyes straying away from me evasively. "I've lived pretty much by myself these last few years." He rose to his feet, cutting short the subject. "Let's go for a stroll, shall we?—get a breath of fresh air into our lungs."

I assented willingly enough. At the back of my mind was an obscure idea that, in the stimulated sense of comradeship evoked between two friends who walk together under a night sky, he might open himself to some confidence that would help me to a more precise definition of the relationship that subsisted between himself and Sylvia. In this I was disappointed. He walked along the asphalt promenade, now almost deserted, with the sea to our left marked only by an irregular, faintly-gleaming line of white in the black obscurity, without a word. He did not even respond to my efforts at conversation. Apparently he did not hear them. Overhead the metallic blue-black heaven was powdered with a multitude of stars, twinkling down upon us from their immense remoteness. He threw his head back to contemplate them as we walked in silence. He baffled me, kept me somehow from my own private thoughts.

Suddenly he switched upon me.

"There can't be nothingness all the way, can there?" he demanded of me with a curious vehemence of interrogation. His hand made an involuntary half-gesture towards the scintillating dome of stars. "There must be *something!*" His manner had the disconcerting intensity of a man who has been brooding overlong in solitude. "At a distance everything melts into the blue. I have seen blank blue sky where on another day there's a range of mountains sharp and clear across the horizon. And they pretend that in all those millions of miles there is nothing—nothing but empty space!" He finished on a note of scorn.

"But surely the astronomers——" I began.

"Pah!" he interrupted me. "What do you or the astronomers know about it? Shut up!"

Shut up I did. He was evidently not in the mood for reasonable conversation. He also "shut up," pursuing in silence thoughts I could not follow. At last he brusquely suggested returning to the hotel.

The next morning, when I met him in the breakfast-room, he was quite his old cheery self, and whatever resentment of his last night's rudeness still rankled in me vanished in the odd charm of his smile. He reminded me of my promise to spend the morning with him "tinkering about" his seaplane. I acquiesced, for two reasons. First, I had nothing else to do, and I still

retained enough of the impress of my old flying days to be genuinely interested in looking over a machine. Secondly, Sylvia would be coming to it for her flight. An uneasy night had not brought me to any satisfying theory of her real attitude towards him.

It was a bright sunshiny morning as we left the hotel, but a south-west breeze ruffled the surface of the sea and the white isolated clouds that drifted across the blue overhead were evidently the advance-guards of a mass yet invisible beyond the horizon. Within an hour or two the sky would almost certainly be overcast. For the moment it was fine, however, and I enjoyed the fresh clarity of the air as we walked down the pier together. At its extremity, on the leeward side of the steamer landing-stage, the seaplane rode the running waves like a great bird that had alighted with outspread wings, the water splashing and sucking against her floats as she jerked and slackened on her mooring-ropes.

We hauled in on them, clambered down into her. She was, as he explained to me, intended for a super-fighting scout, with an immense radius, a great capacity for climb, and a second machine-gun. The space where this second machine-gun had been, just behind the pilot, was now filled with four seats, in pairs behind each other, for the passengers, and he had had her landing-wheels replaced by floats. The morning was still young—nine o'clock struck just as we got on board the machine—and for the next two hours we pottered about her, cleaning her powerful motor, tautening the wire stays to her wings, looking into a hundred and one technical details that would have no interest for anyone but the expert. I enjoyed myself, and Toby was almost pathetically delighted to have someone with him who could enter into his enthusiasms. He had, I could guess, been leading a very solitary life for a long while.

Apparently he almost lived on board her. All sorts of gear were stowed away in her. In one of the lockers I found quite a collection of books, including the Dante he had quoted, and a number of others of a distinctly mystical type—odd reading for a flying man. In another, close to the pilot's seat, was a German automatic pistol.

"Souvenir of the Great War, daddy!" he smiled at me as I handled it.

"But do you know it's loaded?" I objected, disapprovingly.

"Yes," he replied. "I shoot seagulls with it sometimes—chase 'em in the air. It's great sport."

I shrugged my shoulders. Chasing seagulls with a pistol was just one of those mad things I could well imagine Toby doing.

We gave her a dose of oil, filled up her petrol-tank—one of her original pair had been removed to make space for the passengers, but she still had a five-hundred mile radius, he told me—and looked round for something else to do.

"Would you like to take her up and see how she climbs?" he invited me.

"No, thanks!" I replied, hurriedly, uncomfortable in a sudden embarrassment. I had, thanks to the Armistice, managed to conceal my humiliating loss of nerve from the other fellows. "I've given up flying."

His queer eyes rested upon me for a penetrating glance, and I felt pretty sure that he guessed. However, he made no comment.

"All right," he said. "I expect Miss Bryant will be along presently. We'll sit here and wait for her."

WE ensconced ourselves in the passengers' seats and sat there smoking our pipes. The mention of Miss Bryant's name seemed to have killed conversation between us. We sat in a silence that I, at least, felt to be subtly awkward. The intimacy of the morning was destroyed. Both of us withdrew into ourselves, each perhaps preoccupied with the same problem. Once, certainly, I caught his glance hostile upon me.

As I had expected, heavy clouds had come up from the south-west, and the sky was now almost completely overcast. But immediately overhead there was still a clear patch where, through a wide rift in the grey wrack, one looked into the infinite blue. Leaning back in his seat, he stared up at it with eyes that were dreamy in a peculiar fixity of expression.

"Jimmy," he said, suddenly, in a voice that was far away with his thoughts. "In the old days, when you were flying high to drop on a stray Hun—say, at twenty thousand feet, with the earth miles away out of touch—didn't you ever feel that if you went a little higher—climbed and climbed—you would come to something—some other place—didn't it almost seem to you that it would be as easy as going back?"

I glanced at him. Into my mind flitted a memory of his last night's wild talk about the stars. He had always been a little queer. Was he—not quite right?

"I can't say it did," I replied, curtly. "I was always jolly glad to get down again."

He looked at me.

"Yes—I suppose so!" he commented. There was almost an insult in his tone.

Before I could decide whether to resent it or to humour him, I saw Sylvia approaching us along the pier, charming in her summer dress, but prudently with a raincoat over her arm.

"Here's Miss Bryant!" I said, glad of this excuse to put an end to the conversation.

He leaped to his feet with a peculiar alacrity.

"At last!" he ejaculated, as though an immeasurable time of waiting was at an end. He quenched a sudden flash of excitement in his eyes as he caught my glance on his face.

She stood above us on the pier, smiling.

"Here I am!" she said. "But it isn't a very nice morning, is it?"

"It will be all right up above," replied Toby. "Come along—down that next flight of steps." He was trembling with eagerness. I wondered suddenly whether I was wise in letting her go up with him. The man's nerves were obviously strung to high pitch. On the other hand, I had the greatest confidence in his skill—and it was only too likely that she would misinterpret any objections from me, would refuse to listen to them.

WHILE I was hesitating, she had already descended to the lower stage and Toby had helped her along the gang-plank into the machine.

"You see I've brought my raincoat," she said. "It'll be cold up there, won't it?"

"That's no use," replied Toby, with brutal directness. "Here!" He opened a locker where he kept the flying-coats for his passengers. "Put that on."

I helped her with it. She looked more charming than ever in the thick leather coat, the close-fitting leather helmet framing her dainty features. Then I made a step towards the gang-plank.

"But aren't you coming, too?" she demanded, in surprise.

Toby answered for me.

"Esdaile doesn't care for flying," he said, with a sardonic smile, looking me straight in the eyes. There was a sort of mocking triumph in that unmistakable sneer.

"Oh—but *please!*" Sylvia turned to me pleadingly. "Do come!"

"I'd rather take you up alone," said Toby in a stubborn voice, looking up from the mooring-rope he had bent to untether.

She ignored him, laid a hand upon my arm.

"Won't you?" she asked.

"I should infinitely prefer not to," I replied, awkwardly. I cursed myself for my imbecility, but the mere idea of going up in that machine made me feel sick inside, so powerful still was the memory of that moment long ago when, ten thousand feet up, with a Hun just below me plunging in flames to destruction, I had felt my nerve suddenly break, my head go dizzy in an awful panic. "Please excuse me."

She could not, of course, guess my reason.

"I sha'n't go without you," she said, obstinately. Her eyes seemed to be telling me something I was not intelligent enough to catch. "And I want to go. Please—*Jimmy!*"

I surrendered.

"All right," I said, feeling ghastly. "I'll come."

Toby stopped in the act of pulling on his flying-coat, and looked at me. His face was livid, his eyes almost insanely malignant in a sudden fury of bad temper.

"Don't think you're going to spoil it!" he said, through his teeth. "I'll see to that!"

With which cryptic remark he swung himself into the pilot's seat and started the engine with a jerk that almost threw me into the water. I slid down to the seat beside Sylvia. Toby had already cast off the one remaining mooring-rope, and with a whirring roar that gave me an odd thrill of old familiarity, the propeller at our nose a dark blur in its initial low-speed revolutions, we commenced to move over the waves.

For a moment we had a slight sensation of their rise and fall as we partly tore through them, partly floated on their lifting crests, and then suddenly the engine-note swelled to the deafening intensity of full power, the blur of the propeller disappeared, a fount of white spray, sunlit from a rift in the clouds, sprang up on either hand from the floats beneath us, hung poised like jewelled curtains at our flanks, stung our faces with flying drops. For yet a minute or two we raced through the high-flung water, and then, abruptly, the glittering foam-curtains vanished. Our nose lifted. We sagged for another splash, lifted again, on a buoyancy that was not the buoyancy of the sea. I glanced over the side, saw the tossing wave-crests already twenty feet below us.

Instinctively I looked round to Sylvia to see how she was taking it. Her eyes were bright, her face ecstatic. I saw her lips move as she smiled. But her words were swallowed in the roar of the engine and the blast of air that almost choked one. I bent my ear close to her face, just caught her comment as she repeated it.

"It's—*wonderful!*" she gasped.

Then she clutched my arm in sudden nervousness as the machine banked sideways. Below us, diminished already, the pier, the long promenade of Southbeach, whirled round dizzily in a complete circle, got yet smaller as they went. Toby was putting the machine to about as steep a spiral as it could stand. As we went round again and yet again, with our nose seeming to point almost vertically up to the grey ceiling of

cloud and our bodies heavy against the backs of our seats, I had a spasm of alarm that turned to anger. What was he playing at? It was ridiculous to show off like this! I did not doubt his skill—but it would not be the first aeroplane to be stalled so high that it slipped back in a fatal tail-spin. I noticed suddenly that Sylvia was not strapped in her seat, and promptly rectified the omission. I might be all right, but with an inexperienced lady-passenger it was as well to take precautions if he was going to play tricks of this sort.

UP and up we went in those dizzy spirals, Southbeach—disconcertingly never on the side on which one expected it—miniature below us, and I could not help admiring, despite my sickening nervousness, the masterly audacity with which he piloted his machine on the very limit of the possible. He never turned for a glance at us, sat, lifted slightly above us by our slant, doggedly crouched at his controls. I could imagine his face, his lips pressed tight together, his queer eyes alight with the boyish exultation of showing us—or perhaps showing *me*?—what he could do. I did not need the demonstration. I had seen him climb often enough like a circling hawk, gaining height in an almost sheer ascent, racing a Hun to that point of superior elevation which meant victory. There was a time when I could have beaten him at it.

But there was no necessity to play these circus tricks now, above all with a lady on board. Why could he not take her for an ordinary safe flight over the sea, gaining, in the usual way, a reasonable margin of height on an angle that would have been almost imperceptible? I quivered to clamber forward and snatch the controls from him as still we rose, perilously high-slanted in sweep after circular sweep. The grey-black stretch of cloud was now close above us, the rounded modelling of its under-surface like a low roof that seemed to forbid farther ascent.

Again Sylvia clutched at my arm, her face alarmed, and I bent my head down to catch the words she shouted against the all-swallowing roar of the engine. They came just audible.

"Is he—going—through this?"

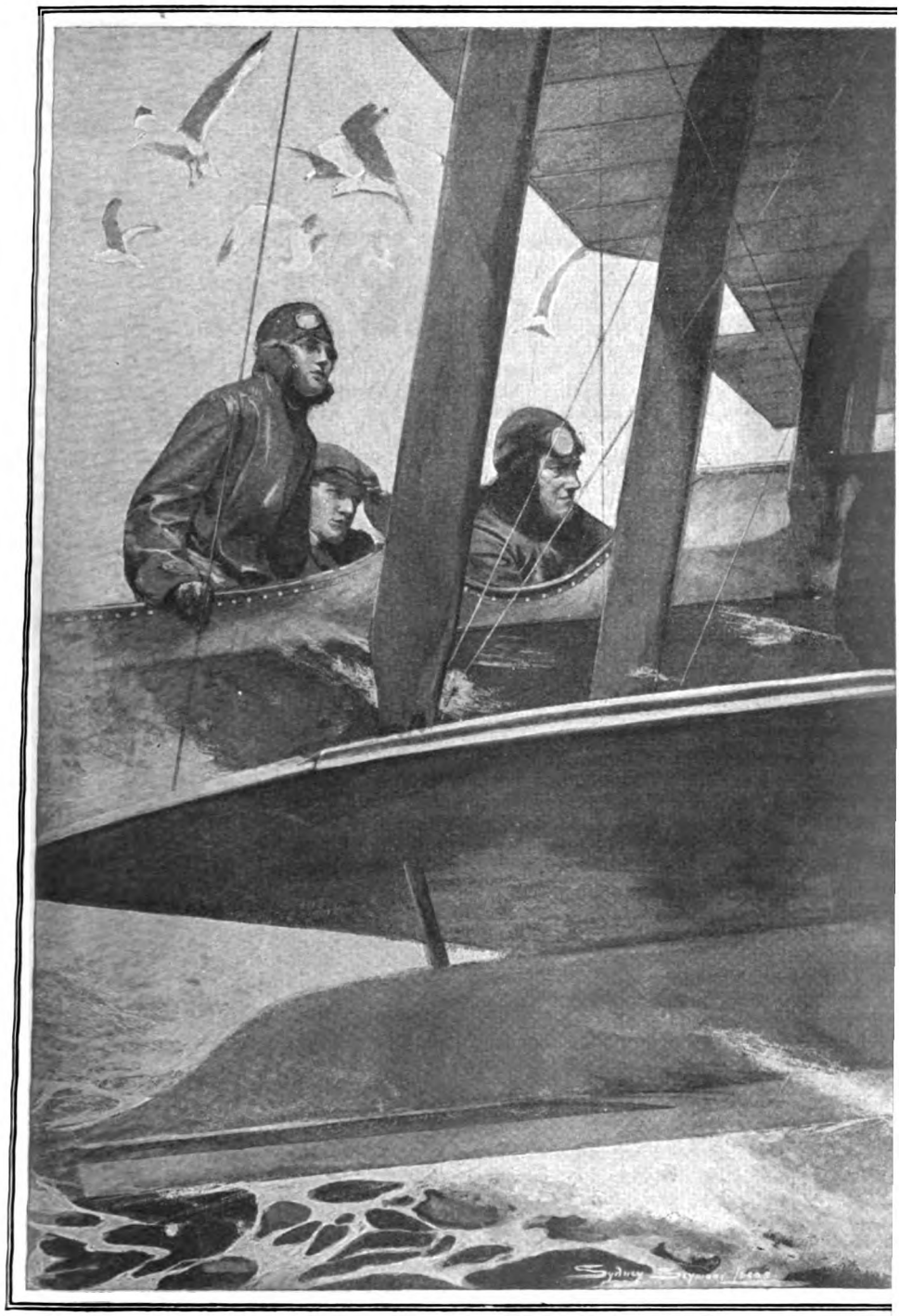
Toby was still holding her nose up, plainly intending to get above the clouds. I saw no sense in making her uneasy. I put my mouth close to her head.

"Blue sky—above!" I shouted.

She nodded, reassured.

The next moment we had plunged into the mass. Except for the sudden twists as we banked, we seemed to be motionless in a dense fog. But the engine still roared, and drops of congealed moisture, collecting on the stays of the upper wings, blew viciously into our faces. The damp cold struck through me to my bones, and I remembered suddenly that I was in my extremely unsuitable ordinary clothes. There was no saying to what height this mad fool might take us—he was still climbing steeply—and I had no mind to catch my death of cold. Hanging on with one hand to the side of the canted-up machine that threatened to fling me out directly I rose from my seat, I managed to reach the locker where he kept the flying-coats for his passengers, wriggled somehow into one of them. It was only by setting my teeth that I did it, for my head was whirling dizzily, and, cursing the day I had strained my nerves beyond breaking-point, I had to fight back desperately an almost overmastering panic that came upon me in gusts from a part of me beyond my will. I could not have achieved it had it not been for the fog, which, blotting out the earth beneath us, obliterated temporarily the sense of height. I was shaking all over as I got back into my seat. I glanced at Sylvia. She was sitting quiet and brave, a little strained perhaps, staring at the blank fog through which we drove in steadily upward sweeps.

Suddenly we emerged into dazzling sunshine, warm despite the cold rush of the air. All above us was an infinite clarity of blue. Sylvia—I guessed rather than heard—shouted something, waved her arm in delighted surprise, pointing around and beneath. Close below us was no longer the earth, but that magical landscape which is only offered by the upper surface of the clouds. We rose for yet a minute or two before we could get the full impression of it. At our first emergence great swelling banks of sunlit snow overtopped us here and there, blew across us from moment to moment, uncannily unsubstantial as we went through them, in mere fog. Then finally we looked down upon it all, the eye ranging far and wide over a magnificent confusion of multitudinous rounded knolls, of fantastic, perilously-toppling lofty crags from which streamed wisps of gossamer vapour, of grotesque mountains and tremendous chasms, such as the wildest scenery of earth can never show. Familiar as it was to me, I could not help admiring anew the immense sublimity of that spectacle which drifts so brilliantly under the blue arch of heaven when the shadowed earth below teems with rain, that spectacle which the eye of earth-bound man never sees. To the extreme limit of vision it stretched, apparently solid, a fairy country gleaming snow-white under the vertical sun, across which our shadow, growing smaller at each instant, flitted like the shadow of a great bird.



Sylvia's eyes were bright, her face ecstatic.
"It's—wonderful!" she gasped.

I felt Sylvia's hand squeeze me in her delight. My exasperated annoyance with Toby died down, all but vanished. Perhaps he wasn't such a fool after all. It was worth while to show her this. That was what he had climbed so steeply for. Now he would flatten out, circle once or twice to imprint this fairy scene upon her memory, and then descend. But he did not. He did not even glance round to us. He held the nose of the machine up, climbed still, higher and higher, in those sheer and dizzy spirals.

This was getting beyond a joke. I glanced at my watch, computed the minutes since we had risen from that grey-green sea now out of sight beneath the horizon-filling floor of cloud. We must be already over five thousand feet up. That was surely quite enough. He might lose his direction, cut off from the earth by that great cloud-layer, miss the sea for our return. A forced landing upon hard ground with those water-floats of ours would be a pretty ugly crash. I craned forward, looked over his shoulder at the dial of the barograph. We were *seven thousand!* What on earth—— ? I shouted at him, but of course he did not hear it in the deafening roar of the engine. I caught hold of his shoulder, shook him hard. I had to shake a second time before his face came round to me. It startled me with its strange set fixity of expression, the wild eyes that glared at me. I gesticulated, pointed downwards. He opened his lips in a vicious ugly snarl, shouted something of which only the ugly rebuff of my interference was intelligible, turned again to his controls, lifted the machine again from its momentary sag.

I sank back into my seat, quivering. Sylvia glanced at me inquiringly. I shrugged my shoulders. She had not, I hoped, seen that ugly snarl upon his face. The cloud-floor was now far below us, its crags and chasms flattened to mere corrugations on its gleaming surface. The seaplane rose, circling round and round untiringly, corkscrewing ever up and up into the infinite blue above us.

I was now thoroughly alarmed. What was he playing at? I worried over the memory of his furious face when I had made my gestured expostulation. Surely he could have no serious purpose of any kind in thus climbing so steeply far above any reasonable altitude? There was no serious purpose imaginable. Unless—no, I refused to entertain the sudden sickening doubt of his sanity. He was playing a joke on us, on *me*. Guessing that I had lost my nerve, and angry with me for spoiling a *tête-à-tête* flight with Sylvia, he was maliciously giving me a twisting. Presently he would get tired of the joke, flatten out.

BUT he did not get tired of it. Up and up we went, in turn after turn—rather wider circles now, for the air was getting rare and thin, and sometimes we side-slipped uncomfortably and the engine flagged, threatening to missfire, until he readjusted the mixture—but still climbing. Far, far below us the cloud-floor was deceptive of our real height in its fallacious similitude to an immense horizon of snow-covered earth.

I glanced at my watch, calculated again our height from the minutes. We must surely now be over fifteen thousand feet! I shrank nervously from the mere thought of again moving to look over his shoulder at the barograph. An appalling feeling of vertigo held me in its clutch. That last glance over the side had done it, reawakening all the panic terror which had swept over me that day when—at such a height as this—I had seen that Hun plunge to destruction and had suddenly realized, as though I had but just awakened from a dream, my own high-poised perilous instability. I sat there clutched and trembling, could not have moved to save my life. I would have given anything to have closed my eyes, forgotten where I was, but the horrible fascination of this upward progress held them open as though mesmerized. I tried to compute the stages of our ascent from our circling sweeps. Eighteen thousand—eighteen thousand five hundred—nineteen thousand—nineteen thousand five hundred—twenty thousand. I gave it up. It was icily cold. My head was dizzy, my ears sizzling with altered blood-pressure. My lungs heaved in this rarefied atmosphere. I glanced at Sylvia. She looked ill, her lips were blue, she was gasping as though about to faint.

She looked at me imploringly, made a gesture with her hand towards Toby's inexorable back. I shrugged my shoulders in sign that I had already protested in vain. But nevertheless I obeyed. Once more I leaned forward and clutched at his shoulder. Once more, after I had shaken him furiously, he turned upon me with that savage snarl, shouted something unintelligible, and switched round again to his controls.

Sylvia and I looked at each other. This time she had seen. In her eyes I read also that doubt of his sanity which was torturing me. She motioned me towards the cockpit, pantomimed me taking over control. It was impossible. I gestured it to her. Even if my nerves had been competent to the task, it was certain that Toby would not voluntarily relinquish his place. To have attempted to take it from him—if he were indeed mad—would have resulted in a savage, pull-devil-pull-baker struggle where the equilibrium of the machine would inevitably have been lost. In about two

seconds we should all of us be hurtling down to certain death. The only thing to do was to sit tight—and hope that he would suddenly have enough of this prank and bring us earthward again. But even if he had suddenly vanished from his place, it was more than I could have done at that moment to have clambered over into the cockpit and taken charge. There was a time when I might have done it. But now I was shaking like a leaf. I could not have pushed a perambulator, let alone pilot an aeroplane.

AND still we climbed, roaring up and up. The yellow canvas of the lower plane, gleaming in the sunshine, seemed curiously motionless against the unchanging blue that was all around us. The earth, the very clouds below us, seemed totally lost. I could not bring myself to venture a glance down to them. We seemed out of contact with everything that was normal life, suspended in the infinite void. And yet the engine roared and I knew that we still climbed.

We must have been somewhere about twenty-five thousand feet—or even more. My head seemed as though it would burst. I was breathing with difficulty. A little higher, and we should need oxygen. Toby's face was, of course, hidden from me, but he sat steadily at his controls, apparently in no embarrassment. Probably he had recently been practising flying to great heights—it would be his queer idea of amusing himself—and was more habituated to changes of atmospheric pressure. I looked at Sylvia. She was plainly much distressed—and more than distressed, *frightened*. I cannot describe the anguish which gripped me as I contemplated her. Whatever I had tried to pretend to myself down there on that distant earth in those six dreary months since my pride had been wounded, I knew now, with an atrocious vividness of realization, that I loved her. And I could do nothing—*nothing*—to save her, if that lunatic in front did not come to his senses! The imploring look she fixed upon me was exquisite torture. Speech was impossible in that deafening roar of the engine, but she made me understand—the bitter irony of it!—that it was in me she trusted. I took her hand, pressed it to my lips. If we were to die she should at least know what I felt for her. And then—O miracle!—I felt my hand pulled towards her, taken to her mouth. She met my eyes with a wan smile of unmistakable meaning.

And then, just as I was all dizzy with the shock of it, the roar of the engine ceased. There was a sudden silence that was awesome in its completeness. Our nose came down to slightly below the horizontal. Thank Heaven, he was tired of the joke, was flattening out, was going to descend! We began, in fact, to circle in a wide, very slightly depressed, slanting curve. Toby twisted round from his seat, one hand still upon the controls. There was a grim little smile on his face as his eyes, curiously glittering, met mine.

"You get out!" he said, curtly. His voice sounded strangely toneless, far off, in that rarefied upper atmosphere.

For a moment I had a spasm of alarm, but I could not believe he was serious. It was too fantastic, at twenty-five thousand-odd feet in the air.

"Don't be a silly ass, Toby! Take us down. The joke has gone far enough." My own voice was thin in my ears.

He ignored my protest.

"This is where you get out!" he repeated, stubbornly.

Was the man really mad? I thought it best to humour him, managed to force a little laugh.

"Thanks very much, but I'd rather go back with you," I said.

"We're not going back," he replied, with grim simplicity. "But you are—here and now."

This was madness right enough! Our only chance was to get him into conversation, turn the current of his thoughts somehow, coax him back to earth.

"Not going back?" I grinned at him as if he were being really funny. "Where are you going, then?"

"We're going on—Sylvia and I."

He smiled at her fondly, nodded as though sure of her assent. She uttered a little cry of alarm, clutched at me. All the time while we were speaking he was steering the aeroplane automatically with one hand, bringing her round and round in wide flat circles where we lost the minimum of height.

"On?" I said, in innocent inquiry, while my brain worked desperately. Curiously enough, in that moment of crisis I found my head as clear, my nerves as steady as they had ever been in my life. All my dizzy turmoil had vanished. I forgot that I had ever had a panic in the air. I was merely trying to think of some scheme by which I might be able to replace him at those controls. "On—where?"

He jerked his hand upwards.

"Up there! On and on, until we come to——" He stopped himself suddenly, his face diabolically suspicious. "You think I'm going to tell you, don't you? You think you'll be able to follow us? But you won't! You get out—here and now—d'you understand?"

I tried to be cunning.

"But, Toby!" I objected, "I think I know the way. Better than you do, perhaps. Change places and let me take the machine."

It was a false move.

"What?" he cried. "You think you know the way, do you? You think you know the way beyond the stars?" He burst suddenly into a hideous laugh, thin and cackling in the awesome silence of that upper air. "Then you'll never get there! —I'll see to that! Get out!" He gestured over the side, into the blue abyss above which we circled. "*Quick!*"

I glanced at Sylvia. She was sitting numbed with horror, incapable of speech. As I looked, she jerked forward in a gesture of wild protest abruptly checked by the straps which held her in her seat. The aeroplane rocked in its now tender equilibrium just as something went *crack!* past my head. My eyes were back on Toby in the fraction of an instant. Still twisted in his seat, he was levelling that automatic pistol at me. I could see by his eyes that he was in the very act of pressing the trigger for the second time.

Four years' war-service in the air makes a man pretty quick. In a flash I had ducked, flung myself upon him over the slight partition between us, wrenched at his wrist. Risky as it was, it was certain death to all of us if this homicidal maniac was not dealt with. His awkward half-turned position put him at a disadvantage, but he fought grimly, with all a maniac's strength, trying to point the muzzle of that pistol at my body. Automatically, of course, he rose to face me, relinquished the controls to use both his hands. I felt the machine lurch and plunge dizzily nose downwards. I had one lightning-quick thought—thank God, Sylvia was strapped!—and then I tumbled over the partition head-first into the cockpit.

It was not thought but instinct with which I clutched the steering-stick—one had not much time for thought when fighting the nimble Fokker—got into some sort of position on the seat. We were vertically nose down, spinning horribly—but not once but many times in the war I had shammed dead, gone rushing earthward in a realistic twirling spin, and then abruptly flattened out of it upside down and come up like a rocket over the pursuing Hun. This was simpler. I had only to pull her out of it—and only when I pulled her out of it, circled her round once for a long, steady glide, did I realize that I was alone in that cockpit. There was no Toby!

I glanced back to Sylvia. She sagged in her seat, against the straps—fainted. Just as well, I thought, grimly. I touched the engine to a momentary activity to test it, shut it off again for a long circling descent towards the cloud-floor far below. An exultation leaped in me, the exultation of old days of peril in the air. I thought of Toby, with whom I had shared so many, with a sudden warming of the heart. Poor old Toby! he had died as after all he perhaps would have wished to die, high up in the infinite blue—dead of shock long before he reached the earth. I thrilled with the old-time sense of mastery over a fine machine, delicately sensitive to the controls, as that massed and pinnacled cloud-landscape grew large again beneath me. My one anxiety was whether it hid sea or land. Then, just as we drew near, I saw a deep black gulf riven in its snowy mass—saw down through that gulf a tiny model steamship trailing a long white wake.

The wedding? That was last year.

NEXT MONTH:

"KITCHEN COMPANY,"

A New Short Story by

W. W. JACOBS.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER IX. *(continued).*

LITERARY CIRCLES IN LONDON

MY pleasant recollection of those days from 1890 to 1893 lay in my first introduction as a more or less rising author to the literary life of London. It is extraordinary to remember that at that time there was a general jeremiad in the London press about the extinction of English literature, and the assumed fact that there were no rising authors to take the place of those who were gone. The real fact is that there was a most amazing crop, all coming up simultaneously, presenting perhaps no Dickens or Thackeray, but none the less so numerous and many-sided and with so high an average of achievement that I think they would match for varied excellence any similar harvest in our literary history.

It was during the years roughly from 1888 to 1893 that Rudyard Kipling, James Stephen Phillips, William Watson, Grant Allen, Wells, Bernard Shaw, Henry Arthur Jones, Pinero, Marie Corelli, Stanley Weyman, Anthony Hope, Hall Caine, and a whole list of others were winning their spurs. Many of these I met in the full flush of their youth and their powers. Of some of them I will speak more fully in the sequel. As to the old school, they were certainly somewhat of a declension, and the new-comers found no very serious opposition in gaining a hearing. Wilkie Collins, Trollope, George Eliot, and Charles Reade had passed. Dear old James Payn, William Black, and kindly Walter Besant were the last survivors of the crew of the old three-decker novel. The latter should be revered by his brother-authors, for no one did so much for their benefit, and that at a time when he was so old that he could hardly expect to profit by his own labours. If the Authors' Society now guards the young author against the predatory publisher, let the said author never forget that it is to the great heart and businesslike brain of Walter Besant that his salvation is due.

Of the literary men whom I met at that time, my most vivid recollections are of the group who centred round the new magazine, the *Idler*, which had been started by Jerome K. Jerome, who had deservedly shot into fame with his splendidly humorous "Three Men in a Boat." It has all the exuberance and joy of life which youth brings with it, and even now, if I have ever time to be at all sad, which is seldom enough, I can laugh away the shadows when I open that book. Jerome is a man who, like most humorists, has a very serious side to his character, as all who have seen "The Third Floor Back" will acknowledge; but he was inclined to be hot-headed and intolerant in political matters, from pure earnestness of purpose, which alienated some of his friends. He was associated in the editorship of the *Idler* with Robert Barr, a volcanic Anglo—or rather Scot—American, with a violent manner, a wealth of strong adjectives, and one of the kindest of natures underneath it all. He was one of the best raconteurs I have ever known, and as a writer I have always felt that he did not quite come into his own. George Burgin, like some quaint gentle character from Dickens, was the sub-editor, and Barrie, Zangwill, and many other rising men were among the contributors who met periodically at dinner. I was not unfaithful to THE STRAND, but there were some contributions which they did not need, and with these I established my connection

Copyright, 1924, by A. Conan Doyle.

with the *Idler*. It was at this time and in this way that I met James Barrie, of whom I shall have more to say when I come to that chapter which treats of some eminent men whom I have known.

"A STORY OF WATERLOO."

Two isolated facts stand out in my memory during that time at Norwood. One was that there seemed to be an imminent danger of war with France, and that I applied for the Mediterranean war-correspondentship of the Central News, guessing that the chief centre of interest would be in that quarter. I got the appointment and was all ready to start, but fortunately the crisis passed. The second was my first venture in the drama. I had written a short story, called "A Straggler of '15," which had seemed to me to be a moving picture of an old soldier and his ways. My own eyes were moist as I wrote it, and that is the surest way to moisten those of others. I now turned this into a one-act play, "A Story of Waterloo," and, greatly daring, I sent it to Henry Irving, of whose genius I had been a fervent admirer ever since those Edinburgh days when I had paid my sixpence for the gallery night after night to see him in "Hamlet" and "The Lyons Mail." To my great delight I had a pleasing note from Bram Stoker, the great man's secretary, offering me a hundred pounds for the copyright. It was a good bargain for Irving, for it is not too much to say that Corporal Gregory Brewster became one of his stock parts, and it had the enormous advantage that the older he got the more naturally he played it. The house laughed and sobbed, exactly as I had done when I wrote it. Several critics went out of their way to explain that the merit lay entirely with the great actor and had nothing to do with the indifferent play, but as a matter of fact the last time I saw it acted it was by a real corporal from a military camp, and in the humble setting of a village hall it had exactly the same effect upon the audience which Irving produced at the Lyceum. So perhaps there was something in the writing after all, and certainly every stage effect was indicated in the manuscript.

I would add that, with his characteristic largeness in money matters, Irving always sent me a guinea for each performance, in spite of his purchase of the copyright. Harry Irving, the son, carried on the part and played it, in my opinion, better than the father. I can well remember the flush of pleasure on his face when I uttered the word "better," and how he seized my hand. I have no doubt it was trying for his great powers to be continually belittled by their measurement with those of his giant father, to whom he bore so remarkable a physical resemblance. His premature death was a great loss to the stage, as was that of his stronger and more original brother Laurence, drowned with his wife in the great Canadian river of the same name as himself.

A GREAT BLOW.

I now come to the great misfortune which darkened and deflected our lives. I have said that my wife and I had taken a tour in Switzerland. I do not know whether she had overtaxed herself in this excursion, or whether we encountered microbes in some inn bedroom, but the fact remains that within a few weeks of our return she complained of pain in her side and cough. I had no suspicion of anything serious, but sent for the nearest good physician. To my surprise and alarm he told me when he descended from the bedroom that the lungs were very gravely affected, that there was every sign of rapid consumption, and that he thought the case a most serious one, with little hope, considering her record and family history, of a permanent cure. With two children, aged four and one, and a wife who was in such deadly danger, the situation was a difficult one. I confirmed the diagnosis by having Sir Douglas Powell down to see her, and I then set all my energy to work to save the situation. The home was abandoned, the newly-bought furniture was sold, and we made for Davos in the High Alps, where there seemed to be the best chance of killing this accursed microbe which was rapidly eating out her vitals.

And we succeeded. When I think that the attack was one of what is called "galloping consumption," that the doctors did not give more than a few months, and yet that we postponed the fatal issue from 1893 to 1906, I think that it is proof that the successive measures were wise. The invalid's life was happy, too, for it was necessarily spent in glorious scenery. It was seldom marred by pain, and it was sustained by that optimism which is peculiar to the disease, and which came naturally to her quickly contented nature.

As there were no particular social distractions at Davos, and as our life was bounded by the snow and fir which girt us in, I was able to devote myself to doing a good deal of work, and also to taking up with some energy the winter sports for which the place is famous. Whilst there I began the Brigadier Gerard series of stories, founded largely upon that great book "The Memoirs of General Marbot." This entailed a good deal of research into Napoleonic days, and my military detail was, I think, very accurate—so much so that I had a warm

letter of appreciation from Archibald Forbes, the famous war correspondent, who was himself a great Napoleonic and military student. Before the end of the winter we were assured that the ravages of the disease had been checked. I dared not return to England, however, for fear of a relapse, so with the summer we moved on to Maloja, another health resort at the end of the Engadine valley, and there we endeavoured to hold all we had won—which, with occasional relapses, we succeeded in doing.

My sister Lottie, free at last from the work which she had so bravely done, had now joined us. Connie, the younger sister, had come back from Portugal earlier, and had joined us at Norwood, where she had formed an affection for Hornung, the novelist, which ended in their marriage. Of Hornung I will speak later. In the meantime, Lottie's presence and the improvement of the invalid, which was so marked that no sudden crisis was thought at all possible, gave me renewed liberty of action. Before the catastrophe occurred I had given some lectures on literature at home, and the work with its movement and bustle was not distasteful to me. Now I was strongly pressed to go to America on the same errand, and in the late autumn of 1894 I set out on this new adventure.

Sir Henry Irving as Corporal Gregory Brewster in "A Story of Waterloo."

LECTURING IN AMERICA.

My brother Innes, he who had shared my first days in Southsea, had since passed through Richmond Public School, and afterwards the Woolwich Academy, so that he was now just emerging as a subaltern. As I needed some companion, and as I thought the change would do him good, I asked him

to come with me to the States. We crossed on the ill-fated German liner *Elbe*, which a very short time afterwards was sunk after collision with a collier in the North Sea. Already I observed evidence of that irrational hatred of the British which in the course of twenty years was to lead to so terrific a result, involving the destruction of the German Empire. I remember that on some *fête* day on board the saloon was thickly decorated with German and American flags, without one single British one, though a fair proportion of the passengers were British. Innes and I then and there drew a Union Jack and stuck it up aloft, where its isolation drew attention to our grievance.

Major Pond was my impresario in America, and a quaint character he was. He seemed the very personification of his country, huge, loose-limbed, straggling, with a goatee beard and a nasal voice. He had fought in the Civil War and been mixed up with every historical American event of his lifetime. He was a good, kind fellow, and we formed a friendship which was never broken. He met us at the docks, and carried us off to a little hotel beside the Aldine Club, a small literary club, in which we had our meals.

Pond had fixed me up a pretty hard schedule, but, on the other hand, I had bargained to get back to Davos in time to spend Christmas with my wife, so that there was a limit to my servitude. My first reading was given in a fashionable Baptist church, which was the usual launching slip for Pond's new lecturers. We had walked from the retiring room and were just coming in sight of the audience when I felt something tickle my ear. I put up my hand and found that my collar was undone, my tie had fallen off, and my stud, the first cause of all the trouble, had disappeared. Standing there, on the edge of the platform, Pond dragged out his own stud. I replaced everything, and sailed on quite as I should be, while Pond retired to refit. It is strange, and possibly rather more than coincidence, how often one is prevented at the last moment from some foolish appearance in public.

The reading went very well and the audience was generous in applause. I have my own theory of reading, which is that it should be entirely disassociated from acting, and should be made as natural and also as audible as possible. Such a presentment is, I am sure, the less tiring for an audience. Indeed, I read to them exactly as in my boyhood I used to read to my mother. I gave extracts from recent British authors, including some work of my own, and as I mixed up the grave and the gay I was able to keep them mildly entertained for an hour.

Some papers maintained that I could not read at all, but I think that what they really meant was that I did not act at all. Others seemed to endorse my method. Anyhow, I had an excellent first reception, and Pond told me that he lay smiling all night after it. He had no difficulty afterwards in booking as many engagements as he could fit into the time. I visited every town of any size between Boston in the north and Washington in the south, while Chicago and Milwaukee marked my western limit.

AMERICAN HOSPITALITY.

Sometimes I found that it took me all my time to fit in the engagements, however fast I might travel. Once, for example, I lectured at Daly's Theatre in New York at a *matinée*, at Princeton College the same evening, some hundred miles away, and at Philadelphia the next afternoon. It was no wonder that I got very tired—the more so as the exuberant hospitality in those pre-Prohibition days was enough in itself to take the energies out of the visitor. It was all done in kindness, but it was dangerous for a man who had his work to do. I had one little break when I paid a pleasant visit to Rudyard Kipling, of which I shall speak later. Bar those few days I was going hard all the time, and it is no wonder that I was so tired out that I kept my bunk most of the way from New York to Liverpool.

My memories are the confused ones of a weary man. I recall one amusing incident when, as I bustled on to the stage at Daly's Theatre, I tripped over the wooden sill of the door, with the result that I came cantering down the sloping stage towards the audience, shedding books and papers on my way. There was much laughter and a general desire for an encore.

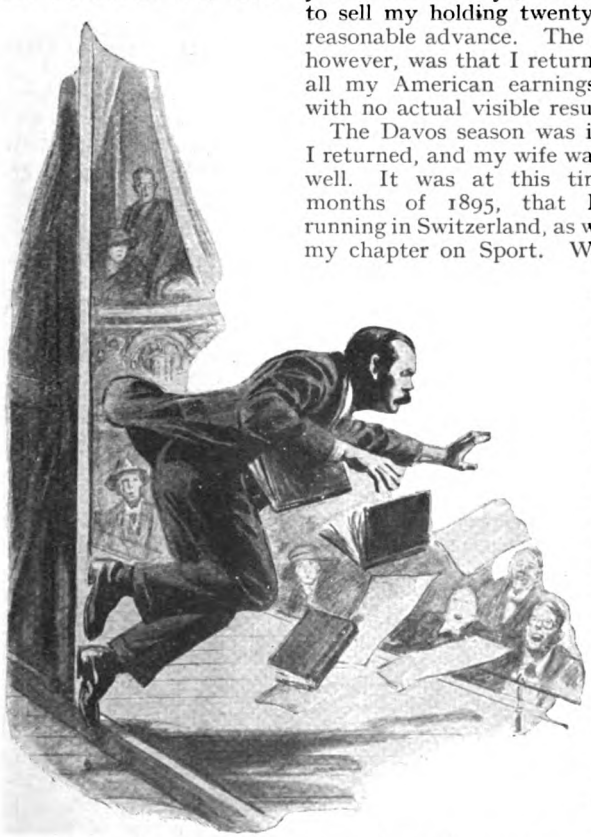
Our visit was marred by one of those waves of anti-British feeling which sweep occasionally over the States, and which emanate from their own early history, every grievance being exaggerated and inflamed by the constant hostility of Irish pressmen and politicians. It all seems very absurd and contemptible to the travelling Briton, because he is aware how entirely one-sided it is, and how welcome, for example, is the American flag in every British public display. This is not known by the home-staying American, and probably he imagines that his own country is treated as rudely by us as ours by his. The Dunraven yacht race had given additional acerbity to this chronic ill-feeling, and it was very active at the time of our visit. I remember that a banquet was given to us at a club at Detroit at which the wine flowed freely, and which ended by a speech by one of our hosts in which he bitterly attacked the

British Empire. My brother and I, with one or two Canadians who were present, were naturally much affronted, but we made every allowance for the lateness of the evening. I asked leave, however, to reply to the speech, and some of those who were present have assured me that they have never forgotten what I said. In the course of my remarks I said: "You Americans have lived up to now within your own palings, and know nothing of the real world outside. But now your land is filled up, and you will be compelled to mix more with the other nations. When you do so you will find that there is only one which can at all understand your ways and your aspirations, or will have the least sympathy. That is the Mother Country which you are now so fond of insulting. She is an Empire, and you will soon be an Empire also, and only then will you understand each other, and you will realize that you have only one real friend in the world." It was only two or three years later that there came the Cuban war, with the incident of Manilla Bay in which the British commander joined up with the Americans against the Germans, and several other incidents which proved the truth of my remarks.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

A writer of average income is bound to lose pecuniarily upon a lecture tour, even in America, unless he prolongs it very much and works very hard indeed. By losing I do not mean that he is actually out of pocket, but that he could have earned far more if he had never gone outside his own study. In my own case I found, after our joint expenses were paid, that there was about a thousand pounds over. The disposal of this money furnished a curious example of the power of prayer, which, as Mr. S. S. McClure has already narrated it, I have no delicacy in telling. He narrates how he was endeavouring to run his magazine, how he was down to his last farthing, how he dropped on his knees on the office floor to pray for help, and how on the same day an Englishman who was a mere acquaintance walked into the office, said: "McClure, I believe in you and in the future of your magazine," and put down a thousand pounds on the table. A critic might perhaps observe that in such circumstances to sell a thousand shares at face value was rather hard upon the ignorant and trusting buyer. For a long time I could clearly see the workings of Providence as directed towards Sam McClure, but could not quite get their perspective as regards myself, but I am bound to admit that in the long run, after many vicissitudes, the deal was justified both ways, and I was finally able to sell my holding twenty years later at a reasonable advance. The immediate result, however, was that I returned to Davos with all my American earnings locked up, and with no actual visible result of my venture.

The Davos season was in full blast when I returned, and my wife was holding her own well. It was at this time, in the early months of 1895, that I developed ski-running in Switzerland, as will be described in my chapter on Sport. We lingered late at Davos, so late that I was able to lay out a golf course, which was hampered in its start by the curious trick the cows had of chewing up the red flags. From Davos we finally moved to Caux, over the Lake of Geneva, where for some months I worked steadily at my writing. With the autumn I visited England, leaving the ladies at Caux, and it was then that events occurred which turned our road of life to a new angle.



I tripped and came cantering down the stage towards the audience, shedding books and papers on my way.

CHAPTER X.

EGYPT IN 1896.

THE wretched microbe which had so completely disorganized our lives, and which had produced all the sufferings so patiently borne, now seemed to be latent, and it was hoped that if we spent a winter in Egypt the cure might be complete. During a short visit to England, whither I had to rush every now and again in order to adjust my affairs, I had met Grant Allen at luncheon, and he had told me that he had also suffered from consumption, and that he had found his salvation in the soil and air of Hindhead in Surrey. It was quite a new idea to me that we might actually live with impunity in England once more, and it was a pleasant thought after resigning oneself to a life which was unnatural to both of us at foreign health resorts. I acted very promptly, for I rushed down to Hindhead, bought an admirable plot of ground, put the architectural work into the hands of my old friend and fellow psychic-researcher Mr. Ball, of Southsea, and saw the builder chosen and everything in train before leaving England in the autumn of 1895. If Egypt was a success we should have a roof of our own to which to return. The thought of it brought renewed hope to the sufferer.

I then set forth, picked up my wife and my sister Lottie at Caux, and took them on by easy stages through Italy, stopping a few days at Rome, and so to Brindisi, where we caught a boat for Egypt. Once at Cairo we took up our quarters at the Mena Hotel, in the very shadow of the Pyramids, and there we settled down for the winter. I was still doing the Brigadier Gerard stories at the time, which required a good deal of Napoleonic research, but I had brought my materials with me, and all I lacked was the energy, which it was most difficult to find in that enervating land.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

On the whole it was a pleasant winter and led up to a most unforeseen climax. I ascended the Great Pyramid once, and was certainly never tempted to do so again, but was content to watch the struggles of the endless drove of tourists who attempted that uncomfortable and useless feat. There was golf of sorts and there was riding. I was still an immature horseman, but I felt that only practice would help me, so I set forth upon weird steeds provided by the livery stables opposite. As a rule, they erred on the side of dullness, but I have a very vivid recollection of one which restored the average. If my right eyelid drops somewhat over my eye, it is not the result of philosophic brooding, but it is the doing of a black devil of a horse with a varminty head, slab-sided ribs, and restless ears. I disliked the look of the beast, and the moment I threw my leg over him he dashed off as if it were a race. Away we went across the desert, I with one foot in the stirrups, holding on as best I might. It is possible I could have kept on until he was weary, but he came suddenly on cultivated land and his forelegs sank in a moment over his fetlocks. The sudden stop threw me over his head, but I held on to the bridle, and he, pawing about with his front hoofs, struck me over the eye and made a deep star-shaped wound which covered me with blood. I led him back, and a pretty sight I presented as I appeared before the crowded veranda! Five stitches were needed, but I was thankful, for I might very easily have lost the sight.

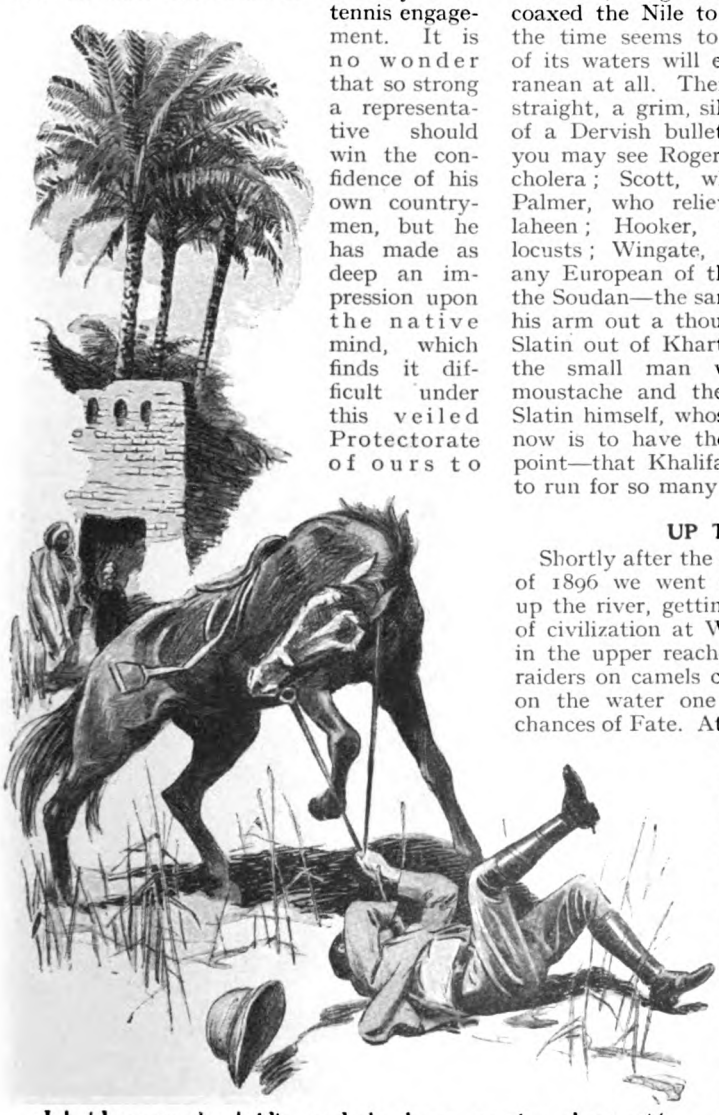
My wife was well enough now to join in society, while my sister Lottie was just at an age to enjoy it, so that we saw a little of the very jovial life of Cairo, though the fact that Mena is some seven miles out, on the most monotonous road in the world, saved us from any excess. It was always a task to get in and out, so that only a great temptation would draw us. I joined in male society, however, a good deal and learned to know many of those great men who were shaping the new destinies of Egypt. I sketched some of them at the time.

THE MEN WHO MADE EGYPT.

"There is a broad and comfortable sofa in the hall of the Turf Club, and if you sit there about luncheon-time you will see a fair sprinkling of Anglo-Egyptians, men who have helped to make, and are still helping to make, the history of our times. You have a view of the street from where you are, and perhaps in the brilliant sunshine a carriage flies past with two running syces before it and an English coachman upon the box. Within, one catches a glimpse of a strong, florid face with a close-cropped, soldierly grey moustache, the expression good-humoured and inscrutable. This is Lord Cromer, whom Egypt has changed from a major of gunners to a peer of the realm, while he in turn has changed it from a province of the East to one of the West. One has but to look at him to read the

secret of his success as a diplomatist. His clear head, his brave heart, his physical health, and his nerves of iron are all impressed upon you even in that momentary glance at his carriage. And that lounging *ennuyé* attitude is characteristic also—most characteristic at this moment, when few men in the world can have more pressing responsibility upon their shoulders. It is what one would expect from the man who at the most critical moment of recent Egyptian history is commonly reported to have brought diplomatic interviews to an abrupt conclusion with the explanation that the time had come for his daily lawn-tennis engagement. It is no wonder that so strong a representative should win the confidence of his own countrymen, but he has made as deep an impression upon the native mind, which finds it difficult under this veiled Protectorate of ours to estimate the comparative strength of individuals. 'Suppose Khedive tell Lord Cromer go, Lord Cromer go?' asked a donkey-boy, and so put his chocolate finger upon the central point of the whole situation.

"But this is a digression from the Turf Club, where you are seated upon a settee in the hall and watching the Englishmen who have done so much to regenerate Egypt. Of all the singular experiences of this most venerable land, surely this rebuilding at the hands of a little group of bustling, clear-headed Anglo-Saxons is the most extraordinary. There are Garstin and Wilcocks, the great water captains who have coaxed the Nile to right and to left, until the time seems to be coming when none of its waters will ever reach the Mediterranean at all. There is Kitchener, tall and straight, a grim, silent soldier, with a weal of a Dervish bullet upon his face. There you may see Rogers, who stamped out the cholera; Scott, who reformed the law; Palmer, who relieved the overtaxed fellaheen; Hooker, who exterminated the locusts; Wingate, who knows more than any European of the currents of feeling in the Soudan—the same Wingate who reached his arm out a thousand miles and plucked Slatin out of Khartoum. And beside him the small man with the yellow-brown moustache and the cheery, ruddy face is Slatin himself, whose one wish in the world now is to have the Khalifa at his sword-point—that Khalifa at whose heels he had to run for so many weary years."



I held on to the bridle, and the horse, pawing about with his front hoofs, struck me over the eye.

UP THE NILE.

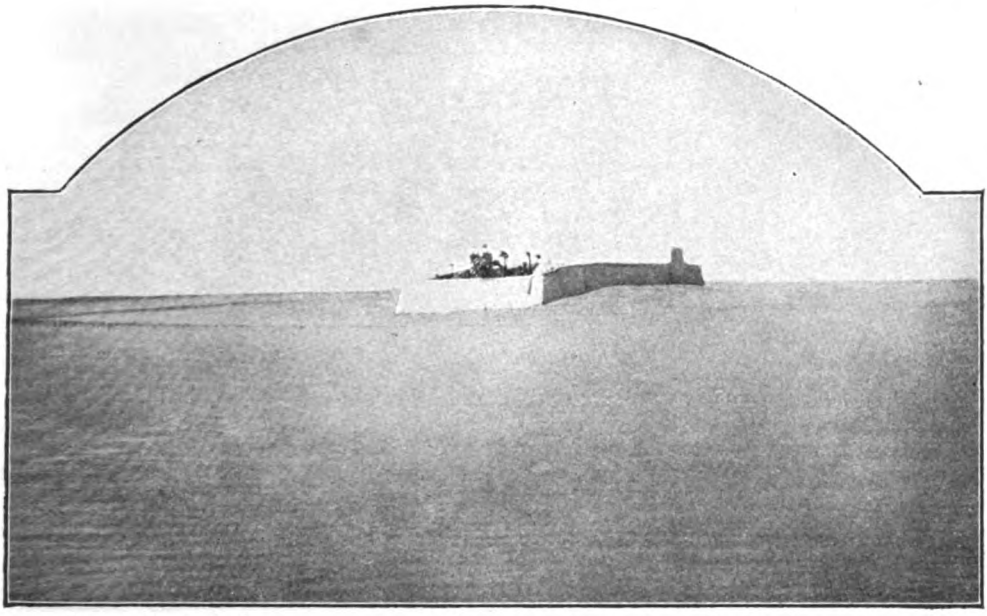
Shortly after the opening of the New Year of 1896 we went in one of Cook's boats up the river, getting as far as the outposts of civilization at Wady Halfa. The banks in the upper reaches were not too safe, as raiders on camels came down at times, but on the water one was safe from all the chances of Fate. At the same time I thought that the managers of these tours took undue risks, and when I found myself on one occasion on the rock of Abousir with a drove of helpless tourists, male and female, and nothing whatever between us and the tribesmen, I could not but think what an appalling situation would arise if a little troop of these far-riding camel men were to appear. We had four Negro soldiers as an escort, who would

be helpless before any normal raiding party. It was the strong impression which I there received which gave me the idea of taking a group of people of different types and working out what the effect of so horrible an experience would be upon each. This became "The Tragedy of the Korosko," published in America as "A Desert Drama" and afterwards dramatized with variations as "The Fires of Fate." All went well, as a matter of fact, but I thought then, and experienced British officers agreed with me, that it was unjustifiable. As the whole frontier force was longing for an excuse to advance I am not sure that they would not have welcomed it if the Dervishes had come to the ground-bait which every week in the same place was laid in front of them.

I do not know how many temples we explored during that tour, but they seemed to me endless, some dating back to the mists of antiquity, and some as recent as Cleopatra and the Roman period. The majestic continuity of Egyptian history seems to be its most remarkable feature. You examine the tombs of the first dynasty at Abydos, and there you see carved deep in the stone the sacred hawk, the goose, the plover, the signs of Horus and Osiris, of Upper and Lower Egypt. These were carved long before the Pyramids were built and can hardly be less ancient than 4000 B.C. Then you inspect a temple built by the Ptolemys, after the date of Alexander the Great, and there you see the same old symbols cut in the same old way. There is nothing like this in the world. The Roman and the British Empires are mushrooms in comparison. Judged by Egyptian standards the days of Alfred the Great would be next door to our own, and our customs, symbols, and way of thinking the same. The race seems to have petrified, and how they could do so without being destroyed by some more vital nation is hard to understand.

Their arts seem to have been high, but their reasoning power in many ways contemptible. The recent discovery of the King's tomb near Thebes—I write in 1923—shows how wonderful were their decorations and the amenities of their lives. But consider the tomb itself! What a degraded intelligence does it not show! The idea that the body, the old outworn great-coat which was once wrapped round the soul, should at any cost be preserved is the last word in materialism. And the hundred baskets of provisions to feed the soul upon its journey! I can never believe that a people with such ideas could be other than emasculated in their minds—the fate of every nation which comes under the rule of a priesthood.

A scene from "The Fires of Fate," the dramatic version of "The Tragedy of the Korosko."



Conan Doyle had many surprising adventures while visiting this Coptic monastery in the Libyan Desert, some fifty miles from Cairo.

THE SALT LAKES.

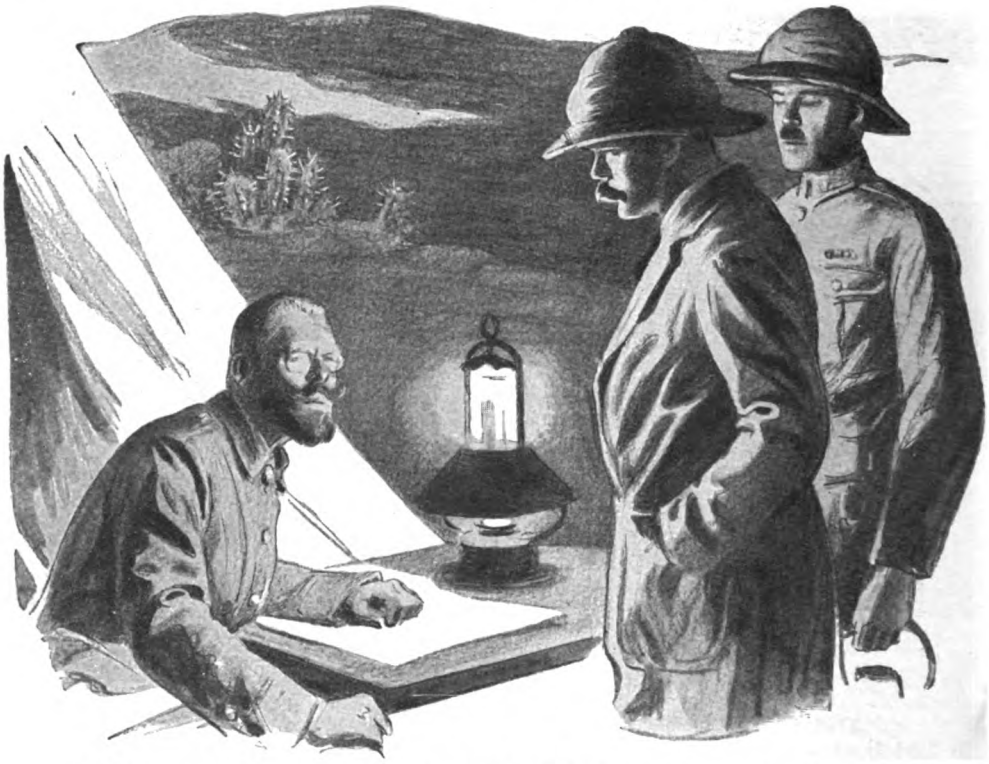
It had been suggested that I should go out to the Salt Lakes in the Desert, some fifty miles from Cairo, and see the old Coptic monastery there. These ancient monasteries, the abode alternately of saints and perverts—we saw specimens of each—have always aroused my keen interest, dating as they do to very early days of Christianity. Indeed, their date is often unknown, but everything betokens great age, and the spirit which founded them seems to have been that of the hermits who in the third and fourth centuries swarmed in these wildernesses.

Leaving my wife at Mena I went with Colonel Lewis, of the Egyptian Army, an excellent companion and guide. On arriving at a wayside station we found a most amazing vehicle awaiting us, a sort of circus coach, all gilding and frippery. It proved to be the coach of state which had been prepared for Napoleon the Third on the chance that he would come to open the Suez Canal. It was surely a good bit of work, for here it was still strong and fit, but absurdly out of place in the majestic simplicity of the Libyan Desert.

Into this we got and set forth, the only guide being wheel marks across the sand, which in some of the harder places were almost invisible. The great sand waste rolled in yellow billows all around us, and far behind us the line of green trees marked the course of the Nile. Once a black dot appeared which, as it grew nearer, proved to be some sort of Oriental upon foot. As he came up to us he opened a blackened mouth, pointed to it, and cried "Moya! Moya!" which means water. We had none and could only point encouragingly to the green belt behind us, on which with a curse he staggered upon his way.

ADVENTURES IN THE DESERT.

A surprising adventure befell us, for the heavens suddenly clouded over and rain began to fall, an almost unknown thing in those parts. We lumbered on, however, with our two horses, while Colonel Lewis, who was keen on getting fit, ran behind. I remember saying to him that in my wildest dreams I never thought that I should drive across the Libyan Desert in an Emperor's coach with a full colonel as carriage dog. Presently in the fading light the horses slowed down, the Nubian driver descended, and began alternately scanning the ground and making gestures of despair. We realized then that he had lost the tracks, and therefore that we had no notion where we were, though we had strong reason to believe that we were to the south of the route. The difficulty was to know which was north and which south. It was an awkward business, since we had no food or water and could see no end to our troubles. The farther we moved the deeper we would



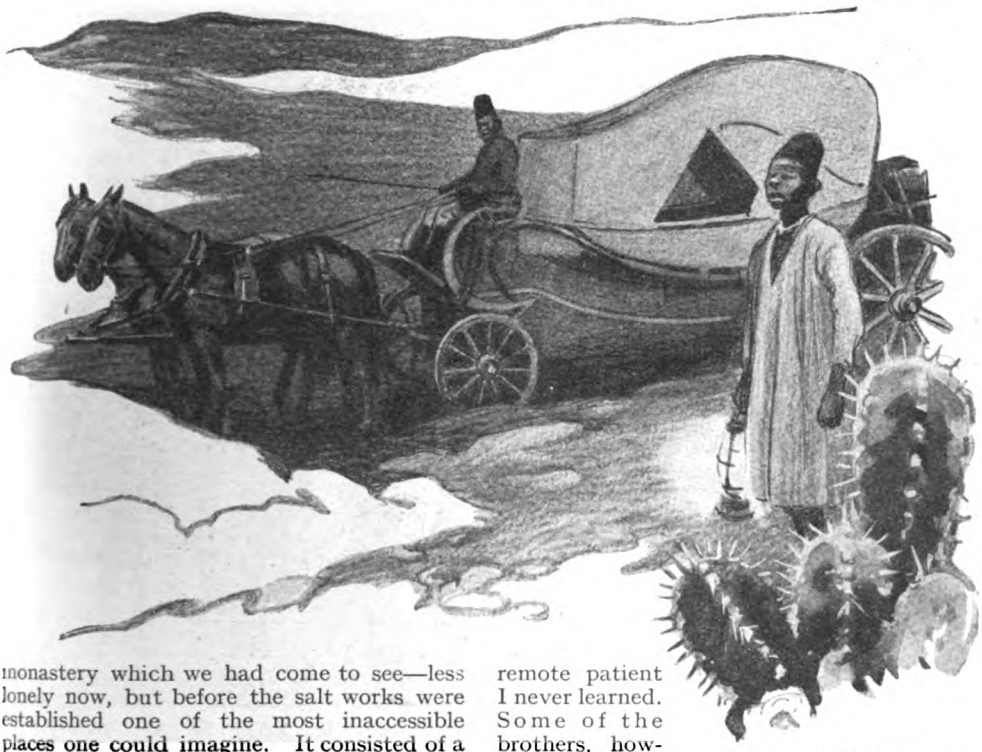
A florid, bearded man was drawing by the light of a lamp. He rather gruffly told us that he was a German surveyor at work in the desert.

be involved. Night had closed in, and I was looking up at the drifting scud above us when in the chink of two clouds I saw for an instant a cluster of stars, and made sure that they were the four wheels of Charles's Wain. I am no astronomer, but I reasoned that this constellation would lie to the north of us, and so it proved, for when we headed that way, examining the ground every hundred yards or so with matches, we came across the track once more.

Our adventures, however, were not over, and it was all like a queer dream. We had great difficulty in keeping the track in the darkness, and the absurd coach lumbered and creaked while we walked with lanterns ahead of it. Suddenly to our joy we saw a bright light in the gloom. We quickened our pace, and came presently to a little tent with a florid, bearded man seated outside it beside a little table, where he was drawing by the light of a lamp. The rain had cleared now, but the sky was still overcast. In answer to our hail, this man rather gruffly told us that he was a German surveyor at work in the desert. He motioned with his hand when we told him whither we were bound, and said it was close by. After leaving him we wandered on, and losing the tracks we were again very badly bushed. It seemed an hour or two before, to our joy, we saw a light ahead and prepared for a night's rest at the half-way house, which was our immediate destination. But when we reached the light, what we saw was a florid, bearded man sitting outside a small tent with a lamp upon a table. Fresh explanations—and this time we really did keep to the track, and reached a big deserted wooden hut, where we put up the horses, ate some cold food, and tumbled, very tired, into two of the bunks which lined it.

THE COPTIC MONASTERY.

The morrow made amends for all. It broke cold and clear, and I have seldom felt a greater sense of exhilaration than when I woke and, walking out before dressing, saw the whole endless desert stretching away on every side of me, yellow sand and black rock, to the blue shimmering horizon. We harnessed up, and within a few hours came on the Natron Lake, a great salt loch, with a few scattered houses at one end where the workers get out and prepare the salt. A couple of miles off was the lonely



monastery which we had come to see—less lonely now, but before the salt works were established one of the most inaccessible places one could imagine. It consisted of a huge outer wall, which seemed to be made of hardened clay. It had no doors or windows save one little opening, which could be easily defended against the prowling Arabs, but I fear the garrison would not be very stout-hearted, for it was said to be the fear of military service which caused many of the monks to discover that they had a vocation.

On being admitted I was conscious that we were not too welcome, though the military title of my companion commanded respect. We were shown round the inner courtyard, where there were palm-trees and a garden, and then round the scattered houses within the wall. Near the latter there was, I remember, a barrel full of some substance which seemed to me both by look and feel to be rounded pieces of some light stone, and I asked if it were to hurl down at the Arabs if they attacked the door. It proved to be the store of bread for the monastery. We were treated to sweet tent wine, which is still used, I believe, in the Holy Communion, showing how straight our customs come from the East.

The abbot seemed to me to be a decent man, but he complained of illness, and seemed gratified when I overhauled him thoroughly, percussed his chest, and promised to send him out some medicine from Cairo. I did so, but whether it ever reached my remote patient I never learned. Some of the brothers, however, looked debauched, and there was a general air of nothing-to-do, which may have been deceptive but which certainly impressed me that day. As I looked from the walls and saw the desert on all sides unbroken save for one blue corner of the lake, it was strange to consider that this was all which these men would ever see of the world, and to contrast their fate with my own busy and picturesque existence.

Next evening Colonel Lewis and I were back in Cairo. We heard no news upon the way, and we had made for the Turf Club and were washing our hands before dinner when some man came in and said:—

"Why, Lewis, how is it you are not with your brigade?"

"My brigade!"

"Have you been away?"

"Yes, at the Natron Lakes."

"Good heavens! Have you heard nothing?"

"No."

"Why, man, war is declared. We are advancing on Dongola. The whole army is concentrating on the frontier, and you are in command of an advanced brigade."

"Good God!" Lewis's soap splashed into the water, and I wonder he did not plump on to the floor. Thus it was that we learned of the next adventure which was opening up before both us and the British Empire.

(To be continued.)

"Have a nut," observed the hat-box, hospitably.
"It's a bird, sir. A parrot!" exclaimed Bowles.

UKRIDGE ROUNDS A NASTY CORNER

BY

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THE late Sir Rupert Lakenheath, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O., was one of those men at whom their countries point with pride. Until his retirement on a pension in the year 1906, he had been Governor of various insanitary outposts of the British Empire situated around the Equator, and as such had won respect and esteem from all. A kindly editor of my acquaintance secured for me the job of assisting the widow of this great administrator to prepare his memoirs for publication; and on a certain summer afternoon I had just finished arraying myself suitably for my first call on her at her residence in Thurloe Square, South Kensington, when there was a knock at the door and Bowles, my landlord, entered, bearing gifts.

These consisted of a bottle with a staring label and a large cardboard hat-box. I gazed at them blankly, for they held no message for me.

Bowles, in his ambassadorial manner, condescended to explain.

"Mr. Ukridge," he said, with the ring of paternal affection in his voice which always crept into it when speaking of that

Copyright, 1924, by P. G. Wodehouse.

menace to civilization, "called a moment ago, sir, and desired me to hand you these."

Having now approached the table on which he had placed the objects, I was enabled to solve the mystery of the bottle. It was one of those fat, bulging bottles, and it bore across its diaphragm in red letters the single word "PEPPO." Beneath this, in black letters, ran the legend, "It Bucks You Up." I had not seen Ukridge for more than two weeks, but at our last meeting, I remembered, he had spoken of some foul patent medicine of which he had somehow secured the agency. This, apparently, was it.

"But what's in the hat-box?" I asked.

"I could not say, sir," replied Bowles.

At this point the hat-box, which had hitherto not spoken, uttered a crisp, sailorly oath, and followed it up by singing the opening bars of "Annie Laurie." It then relapsed into its former moody silence.

A few doses of Peppo would, no doubt, have enabled me to endure this remarkable happening with fortitude and phlegm. Not having taken that specific, the thing had a devastating effect upon my nervous centres. I bounded back and upset a chair, while Bowles, his dignity laid aside, leaped silently towards the ceiling. It was the first time I had ever seen him lay off the mask, and even in that trying moment I could not help being gratified by the spectacle. It gave me one of those thrills that come once in a lifetime.

"For Gord's sake!" ejaculated Bowles.

"Have a nut," observed the hat-box, hospitably. "Have a nut."

Bowles's panic subsided.

"It's a bird, sir. A parrot!"

"What the deuce does Ukridge mean," I cried, becoming the outraged householder, "by cluttering up my rooms with his beastly parrots? I'd like that man to know——"

The mention of Ukridge's name seemed to act on Bowles like a soothing draught. He recovered his poise.

"I have no doubt, sir," he said, a touch of coldness in his voice that rebuked my outburst, "that Mr. Ukridge has good reasons for depositing the bird in our custody. I fancy he must wish you to take charge of it for him."

"He may wish it——" I was beginning, when my eye fell on the clock. If I did not want to alienate my employer by keeping her waiting, I must be on my way immediately.

"Put that hat-box in the other room, Bowles," I said. "And I suppose you had better give the bird something to eat."

"Very good, sir. You may leave the matter in my hands with complete confidence."

THE drawing-room into which I was shown on arriving at Thurloe Square was filled with many mementoes of the late Sir Rupert's gubernatorial career. In addition the room contained a small and bewilderingly pretty girl in a blue dress, who smiled upon me pleasantly.

"My aunt will be down in a moment," she said, and for a few moments we exchanged commonplaces. Then the door opened and Lady Lakenheath appeared.

The widow of the Administrator was tall, angular, and thin, with a sun-tanned face of a cast so determined as to make it seem a tenable theory that in the years previous to 1906 she had done at least her share of the administrating. Her whole appearance was that of a woman designed by Nature to instil law and order into the bosoms of boisterous cannibal kings. She surveyed me with an appraising glance, and then, as if reconciled to the fact that, poor specimen though I might be, I was probably as good as anything else that could be got for the money, received me into the fold by pressing the bell and ordering tea.

Tea had arrived, and I was trying to combine bright dialogue with the difficult feat of balancing my cup on the smallest saucer I had ever seen, when my hostess, happening to glance out of window into the street below, uttered something midway between a sigh and a click of the tongue.

"Oh, dear! That extraordinary man again!"

The girl in the blue dress, who had declined tea and was sewing in a distant corner, bent a little closer over her work.

"Millie!" said the administratress, plaintively, as if desiring sympathy in her trouble.

"Yes, Aunt Elizabeth?"

"That man is calling again!"

There was a short but perceptible pause. A delicate pink appeared in the girl's cheeks.

"Yes, Aunt Elizabeth?" she said.

"Mr. Ukridge," announced the maid at the door.

It seemed to me that if this sort of thing was to continue, if existence was to become a mere series of shocks and surprises, Peppo would have to be installed as an essential factor in my life. I stared speechlessly at Ukridge as he breezed in with the unmistakable air of sunny confidence which a man shows on familiar ground. Even if I had not had Lady Lakenheath's words as evidence, his manner would have been enough to tell me that he was a frequent visitor in her drawing-room; and how he had come to be on calling terms with a lady so pre-eminently respectable it was beyond me to imagine. I awoke from my

stupor to find that we were being introduced, and that Ukridge, for some reason clear, no doubt, to his own tortuous mind but inexplicable to me, was treating me as a complete stranger. He nodded courteously but distantly, and I, falling in with his unspoken wishes, nodded back. Plainly relieved, he turned to Lady Lakenheath and plunged forthwith into the talk of intimacy.

"I've got good news for you," he said. "News about Leonard."

The alteration in our hostess's manner at these words was remarkable. Her somewhat forbidding manner softened in an instant to quite a tremulous fluttering. Gone was the hauteur which had caused her but a moment back to allude to him as "that extraordinary man." She pressed tea upon him, and scones.

"Oh, Mr. Ukridge!" she cried.

"I don't want to rouse false hopes and all that sort of thing, laddie—I mean, Lady Lakenheath, but, upon my Sam, I really believe I am on the track. I have been making the most assiduous inquiries."

"How very kind of you!"

"No, no," said Ukridge, modestly.

"I have been so worried," said Lady Lakenheath, "that I have scarcely been able to rest."

"Too bad!"

"Last night I had a return of my wretched malaria."

At these words, as if he had been given a cue, Ukridge reached under his chair and produced from his hat, like some conjurer, a bottle that was own brother to the one he had left in my rooms. Even from where I sat I could read those magic words of cheer on its flaunting label.

"Then I've got the very stuff for you," he boomed. "This is what you want. Glowing reports on all sides. Two doses, and cripples fling away their crutches and join the Beauty Chorus."

"I am scarcely a cripple, Mr. Ukridge," said Lady Lakenheath, with a return of her earlier bleakness.

"No, no! Good heavens, no! But you can't go wrong by taking Peppo."

"Peppo?" said Lady Lakenheath, doubtfully.

"It bucks you up."

"You think it might do me good?" asked the sufferer, wavering. There was a glitter in her eye that betrayed the hypochondriac, the woman who will try anything once.

"Can't fail."

"Well, it is most kind and thoughtful of you to have brought it. What with worrying over Leonard——"

"I know, I know," murmured Ukridge, in a positively bedside manner.

"It seems so strange," said Lady Lakenheath, "that, after I had advertised in all the papers, someone did not find him."

"Perhaps someone did find him!" said Ukridge, darkly.

"You think he must have been stolen?"

"I am convinced of it. A beautiful parrot like Leonard, able to talk in six languages——"

"And sing," murmured Lady Lakenheath.

"—— *and* sing," added Ukridge, "is worth a lot of money. But don't you worry, old—er—don't you worry. If the investigations which I am conducting now are successful, you will have Leonard back safe and sound to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Absolutely to-morrow. Now tell me all about your malaria."

I felt that the time had come for me to leave. It was not merely that the conversation had taken a purely medical turn and that I was practically excluded from it; what was really driving me away was the imperative necessity of getting out in the open somewhere and thinking. My brain was whirling. The world seemed to have become suddenly full of significant and disturbing parrots. I seized my hat and rose. My hostess was able to take only an absent-minded interest in my departure. The last thing I saw as the door closed was Ukridge's look of big-hearted tenderness as he leaned forward so as not to miss a syllable of his companion's clinical revelations. He was not actually patting Lady Lakenheath's hand and telling her to be a brave little woman, but short of that he appeared to be doing everything a man could do to show her that, rugged though his exterior might be, his heart was in the right place and aching for her troubles.

I WALKED back to my rooms. I walked slowly and pensively, bumping into lampposts and pedestrians. It was a relief, when I finally reached Ebury Street, to find Ukridge smoking on my sofa. I was resolved that before he left he should explain what this was all about, if I had to wrench the truth from him.

"Hullo, laddie!" he said. "Upon my Sam, Corky, old horse, did you ever in your puff hear of anything so astounding as our meeting like that? Hope you didn't mind my pretending not to know you. The fact is, my position in that house—— What the dickens were you doing there, by the way?"

"I'm helping Lady Lakenheath prepare her husband's memoirs."

"Of course, yes. I remember hearing her say she was going to rope in someone. But what a dashed extraordinary thing it should

"I've got the very stuff for you," Ukridge boomed. "Two doses, and cripples fling away their crutches and join the Beauty Chorus."

be you! However, where was I? Oh, yes. My position in the house, Corky, is so delicate that I simply didn't dare risk entering into any entangling alliances. What I mean to say is, if we had rushed into each other's arms, and you had been established in the old lady's eyes as a friend of mine, and then one of these days you had happened to make a bloomer of some kind—as you well might, laddie—and got heaved into the street on your left ear—well, you see where I would be. I should be involved in your downfall. And I solemnly assure you, laddie, that my whole existence is staked on keeping in with that female. I *must* get her consent!"

"Her what?"

"Her consent. To the marriage."

"The marriage?"

Ukridge blew a cloud of smoke, and gazed through it sentimentally at the ceiling.

"Isn't she a perfect angel?" he breathed, softly.

"Do you mean Lady Lakenheath?" I asked, bewildered.

"Fool! No, Millie."

"Millie? The girl in blue?"

Ukridge sighed dreamily.

"She was wearing that blue dress when I first met her, Corky. And a hat with thing-ummies. It was on the Underground. I gave her my seat, and, as I hung over her suspended by a strap, I fell in love absolutely in a flash. I give you my honest word, laddie, I fell in love with her for all eternity between Sloane Square and South Kensington stations. She got out at South Kensington. So did I. I followed her to the house, rang the bell, got the maid to show me in, and, once I was in, put up a yarn about being misdirected and coming to the wrong address and all that sort of thing. I think they thought I was looney or trying to sell life insurance or something, but I didn't mind that. A few days later I called, and after that I hung about, keeping an eye on their movements, met 'em everywhere they went, and bowed and passed a word and generally made my presence felt, and—well, to cut a long story short, old horse, we're engaged. I happened to find out that Millie was in the habit of taking the dog for a run in Kensington Gardens every morning at eleven, and after that things began to move. It took a bit of doing, of course, getting up so early, but I was on the spot every day and we talked and bunged sticks for the dog, and—well, as I say, we're engaged. She is the most amazing, wonderful girl, laddie, that you ever encountered in your life."

I had listened to this recital dumbly. The thing was too cataclysmal for my mind. It overwhelmed me.

"But——" I began.

"But," said Ukridge, "the news has yet to be broken to the old lady, and I am striving with every nerve in my body, with every fibre of my brain, old horse, to get in right with her. That is why I brought her that Peppo. Not much, you may say, but every little helps. Shows zeal. Nothing like zeal. But, of course, what I'm really relying on is the parrot. That's my ace of trumps."

I passed a hand over my corrugated forehead.

"The parrot!" I said, feebly. "Explain about the parrot." Ukridge eyed me with honest astonishment.

"Do you mean to tell me you haven't got on to that? A man of your intelligence! Corky, you amaze me. Why, I pinched it, of course. Or, rather, Millie and I pinched it together. Millie—a girl in a million, laddie!—put the bird in a string-bag one night when her aunt was dining out and lowered it to me out of the drawing-room window. And I've been keeping it in the background till the moment was ripe for the spectacular return. Wouldn't have done to take it back at once. Bad strategy. Wiser to hold it in reserve for a few days and show zeal and work up the interest. Millie and I are building on the old lady's being so supremely bucked at having the bird restored to her that there will be nothing she won't be willing to do for me."

"But what do you want to dump the thing in my rooms for?" I demanded, reminded of my grievance. "I never got such a shock as when that damned hat-box began to back-chat at me."

"I'm sorry, old man, but it had to be. I could never tell that the old lady might not take it into her head to come round to my rooms about something. I'd thrown out—mistakenly, I realize now—an occasional suggestion about tea there some afternoon. So I had to park the bird with you. I'll take it away to-morrow."

"You'll take it away to-night!"

"Not to-night, old man," pleaded Ukridge. "First thing to-morrow. You won't find it any trouble. Just throw it a word or two every now and then and give it a bit of bread dipped in tea or something, and you won't have to worry about it at all. And I'll be round by noon at the latest to take it away. May Heaven reward you, laddie, for the way you have stood by me this day!"

FOR a man like myself, who finds at least eight hours of sleep essential if that schoolgirl complexion is to be preserved, it was unfortunate that Leonard the parrot should have proved to be a bird of high-strung temperament, easily upset. The experiences which he had undergone since leaving home had, I was to discover, jarred his nervous system. He was reasonably tranquil during the hours preceding bedtime, and had started his beauty-sleep before I myself turned in; but at two in the morning something in the nature of a nightmare must have attacked him, for I was wrenched from slumber by the sound of a hoarse soliloquy in what I took to be some native dialect. This lasted without a break till two-fifteen, when he made a noise like a steam-riveter for some moments; after which, apparently soothed, he fell asleep again. I dropped off at about three, and at three-thirty was awakened by the strains of a deep-sea chanty. From then on our periods of sleep never seemed to coincide. It was a wearing night, and before I went out

after breakfast I left imperative instructions with Bowles for Ukridge, on arrival, to be informed that, if anything went wrong with his plans for removing my guest that day, the mortality statistics among parrots would take an up-curve. Returning to my rooms in the evening, I was pleased to see that this manifesto had been taken to heart. The hat-box was gone, and about six o'clock Ukridge appeared, so beaming and effervescent that I understood what had happened before he spoke. "Corky, my boy," he said, vehemently, "this is the maddest, merriest day of all the glad New Year, and you can quote me as saying so!"

"Lady Lakenheath has given her consent?"

"Not merely given it, but bestowed it blithely, jubilantly."

"It beats me," I said.

"What beats you?" demanded Ukridge, sensitive to the jarring note.

"Well, I don't want to cast any aspersions, but I should have thought the first thing she would have done would be to make searching inquiries about your financial position."

"My financial position? What's wrong with my financial position? I've got considerably over fifty quid in the bank, and I'm on the eve of making an enormous fortune out of this Peppo stuff."

"And that satisfied Lady Lakenheath?" I said, incredulously.

Ukridge hesitated for a moment.

"Well, to be absolutely frank, laddie," he admitted, "I have an idea that she rather supposes that in the matter of financing the venture my aunt will rally round and keep things going till I am on my feet."

"Your aunt! But your aunt has finally and definitely disowned you."

"Yes. To be perfectly accurate, she has. But the old lady doesn't know that. In fact, I rather made a point of keeping it from her. You see, I found it necessary, as things turned out, to play my aunt as my ace of trumps."

"You told me the parrot was your ace of trumps."

"I know I did. But these things slip up at the last moment. She seethed with gratitude about the bird, but when I seized the opportunity to ask her for her blessing I was shocked to see that she put her ears back and jibbed. Got that nasty steely look in her eyes and began to talk about clandestine meetings and things being kept from her. It was an occasion for the swiftest thinking, laddie. I got an inspiration. I played up my aunt. It worked like magic. It seems the old lady has long been an admirer of her novels, and has always wanted to meet her. She went down and out for the full count the moment I introduced my aunt into the conversation, and I have had no trouble with her since."

"Have you thought what is going to happen when they do meet? I can't see your aunt delivering a striking testimonial to your merits."

"That's all right. The fact of the matter is, luck has stood by me in the most amazing way all through. It happens that my aunt is out of town. She's down at her cottage in Sussex finishing a novel, and on Saturday she sails for America on a lecturing tour."

"How did you find that out?"

"Another bit of luck. I ran into her new secretary, a bloke named Wassick, at the Savage smoker last Saturday. There's no chance of their meeting. When my aunt's finishing a novel, she won't read letters or telegrams, so it's no good the old lady trying to get a communication through to her. It's Wednesday now, she sails on Saturday, she will be away six months—why, damme, by the time she hears of the thing I shall be an old married man."

IT had been arranged between my employer and myself during the preliminary negotiations that I should give up my afternoons to the memoirs and that the most convenient plan would be for me to present myself at Thurloe Square daily at three o'clock. I had just settled myself on the following day in the ground-floor study when the girl Millie came in, carrying papers.

"My aunt asked me to give you these," she said. "They are Uncle Rupert's letters home for the year 1889."

I looked at her with interest and something bordering on awe. This was the girl who had actually committed herself to the appalling task of going through life as Mrs. Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge—and, what is more, seemed to like the prospect. Of such stuff are heroines made.

"Thank you," I said, putting the papers on the desk. "By the way, may I—I hope you will—— What I mean is, Ukridge told me all about it. I hope you will be very happy."

Her face lit up. She really was the most delightful girl to look at I had ever met. I could not blame Ukridge for falling in love with her.

"Thank you very much," she said. She sat in the huge arm-chair, looking very small. "Stanley has been telling me what friends you and he are. He is devoted to you."

"Great chap!" I said, heartily. I would have said anything which I thought would please her. She exercised a spell, this girl. "We were at school together."

"I know. He is always talking about it." She looked at me with round eyes exactly like a Persian kitten's. "I suppose you will be his best man?" She bubbled with happy laughter. "At one time I was awfully afraid there wouldn't be any need for a best man. Do you think it was very wrong of us to steal Aunt Elizabeth's parrot?"

"Wrong?" I said, stoutly. "Not a bit of it. What an idea!"

"She was terribly worried," argued the girl.

"Best thing in the world," I assured her. "Too much peace of mind leads to premature old age."

"All the same, I have never felt so wicked and ashamed of myself. And I know Stanley felt just like that, too."

"I bet he did!" I agreed, effusively. Such was the magic of this Dresden China child that even her preposterous suggestion that Ukridge possessed a conscience could not shake me.

"He's so wonderful and chivalrous and considerate."

"The very words I should have used myself!"

"Why, to show you what a beautiful nature he has, he's gone out now with my aunt to help her do her shopping."

"You don't say so!"

"Just to try to make it up to her, you see, for the anxiety we caused her."

"It's noble! That's what it is. Absolutely noble!"

"And if there's one thing in the world he loathes it is carrying parcels."

"The man," I exclaimed, with fanatical enthusiasm, "is a perfect Sir Galahad!"

"Isn't he? Why, only the other day——"

SHE was interrupted. Outside, the front door slammed. There came a pounding of large feet in the passage. The door of the study flew open, and Sir Galahad himself charged in, his arms full of parcels.

"Corky!" he began. Then, perceiving his future wife, who had risen from the chair in alarm, he gazed at her with a wild pity in his eyes, as one who has bad news to spring. "Millie, old girl," he said, feverishly, "we're in the soup!"

The girl clutched the table.

"Oh, Stanley, darling!"

"There is just one hope. It occurred to me as I was——"

"You don't mean that Aunt Elizabeth has changed her mind?"

"She hasn't yet. But," said Ukridge, grimly, "she's pretty soon going to, unless we move with the utmost dispatch."

"But what has happened?"

Ukridge shed the parcels. The action seemed to make him calmer.

"We had just come out of Harrod's," he said, "and I was about to leg it home with these parcels, when she sprang it on me! Right out of a blue sky!"

"What, Stanley, dear? Sprang what?"

"This ghastly thing. This frightful news that she proposes to attend the dinner of the Pen and Ink Club on Friday night. I saw her talking to a pug-nosed female we met in the fruit, vegetable, birds, and pet dogs department, but I never guessed what they were talking about. She was inviting the old lady to that infernal dinner!"

"But, Stanley, why shouldn't Aunt Elizabeth go to the Pen and Ink Club dinner?"

"Because my aunt is coming up to town on Friday specially to speak at that dinner, and your aunt is going to make a point of introducing herself and having a long chat about me."

We gazed at one another silently. There was no disguising the gravity of the news. Like the coming together of two uncongenial chemicals, this meeting of aunt with aunt must inevitably produce an explosion. And in that explosion would perish the hopes and dreams of two loving hearts.

"Oh, Stanley! What can we do?"

If the question had been directed at me, I should have been hard put to it to answer; but Ukridge, that man of resource, though he might be down, was never out.

"There is just one scheme. It occurred to me as I was sprinting along the Brompton Road. Laddie," he proceeded, laying a heavy hand on my shoulder, "it involves your co-operation."

"Oh, how splendid!" cried Millie.

It was not quite the comment I would have made myself. She proceeded to explain.

"Mr. Corcoran is so clever. I'm sure, if it's anything that can be done, he will do it."

This ruled me out as a potential resister. Ukridge I might have been able to withstand, but so potently had this girl's spell worked upon me that in her hands I was as wax.

Ukridge sat down on the desk, and spoke with a tenseness befitting the occasion.

"It's rummy in this life, laddie," he began in moralizing vein, "how the rottenest times a fellow goes through may often do him a bit of good in the end. I don't suppose I have ever enjoyed any period of my existence less than those months I spent at my aunt's house in Wimbledon. But mark the sequel, old horse! It was while going through that ghastly experience that I gained a knowledge of her habits which is going to save us now. You remember Dora Mason?"

"Who is Dora Mason?" inquired Millie, quickly.

"Millie, old girl," said Ukridge, feverishly, "we're in the soup!"

"A plain, elderly sort of female who used to be my aunt's secretary," replied Ukridge, with equal promptness.

Personally, I remembered Miss Mason as a rather unusually pretty and attractive girl, but I felt that it would be injudicious to say so. I contented myself with making a mental note to the effect that Ukridge,

whatever his drawbacks as a husband, had at any rate that ready tact which is so helpful in the home.

"Miss Mason," he proceeded, speaking, I thought, in a manner a shade more careful and measured, "used to talk to me about her job from time to time. I was sorry for the poor old thing, you understand, because hers was a grey life, and I made rather a point of trying to cheer her up now and then."

"How like you, dear!"

It was not I who spoke—it was Millie. She regarded her betrothed with shining and admiring eyes, and I could see that she was thinking that my description of him as a modern Galahad was altogether too tame.

"And one of the things she told me," continued Ukridge, "was that my aunt, though she's always speaking at these bally dinners, can't say a word unless she has her speech written for her and memorizes it. Miss Mason swore solemnly to me that she had written every word my aunt had spoken in public in the last two years. You begin to get on to the scheme, laddie? The long and the short of it is that we must get hold of that speech she's going to deliver at the Pen and Ink Club binge. We must intercept it, old horse, before it can reach her. We shall thus spike her guns. Collar that speech, Corky, old man, before she can get her hooks on it, and you can take it from me that she'll find she has a headache on Friday night and can't appear."

There stole over me that sickening conviction that comes to those in peril that I was for it.

"But it may be too late," I faltered, with a last feeble effort at self-preservation. "She may have the speech already."

"Not a chance. I know what she's like when she's finishing one of these beastly books. No distractions of any sort are permitted. Wassick, the secretary bloke, will have had instructions to send the thing to her by registered post to arrive Friday morning, so that she can study it in the train. Now, listen carefully, laddie, for I have thought this thing out to the last detail. My aunt is at her cottage at Market Deeping, in Sussex. I don't know how the trains go, but there's sure to be one that'll get me to Market Deeping to-night. Directly I arrive I shall send a wire to Wassick—signed 'Ukridge,'" said the schemer. "I have a perfect right to sign telegrams 'Ukridge,'" he added, virtuously, "in which I tell him to hand the speech over to a gentleman who will call for it, as arrangements have been made for him to take it down to the cottage. All you have to do is to call at my aunt's house, see Wassick—a splendid fellow, and just the sort of chump who won't suspect a thing—get the manuscript, and biff off. Once round the corner, you dump it in the nearest garbage-box and all is well."

"Isn't he wonderful, Mr. Corcoran?" cried Millie.

"I can rely on you, Corky? You will not let me down over your end of the business?"

"You *will* do this for us, Mr. Corcoran, won't you?" pleaded Millie.

I gave one look at her. Her Persian kitten eyes beamed into mine—gaily, trustfully, confidently. I gulped.

"All right," I said, huskily.

A LEADEN premonition of impending doom weighed me down next morning as I got into the cab which was to take me to Heath House, Wimbledon Common. I tried to correct this shuddering panic by telling myself that it was simply due to my recollection of what I had suffered at my previous visit to the place, but it refused to leave me. A black devil of apprehension sat on my shoulder all the way, and as I rang the front-door bell it seemed to me that this imp emitted a chuckle more sinister than any that had gone before. And suddenly as I waited there I understood.

No wonder the imp had chuckled! Like a flash I perceived where the fatal flaw in this enterprise lay. It was just like Ukridge, poor impetuous, woollen-headed ass, not to have spotted it; but that I myself should have overlooked it was bitter indeed. The simple fact which had escaped our joint attention was this—that, as I had visited the house before, the butler would recognize me. I might succeed in purloining the speech, but it would be reported to the Woman Up Top that the mysterious visitor who had called for the manuscript was none other than the loathly Mr. Corcoran of hideous memory—and what would happen then? Prosecution? Jail? Social ruin?

I was on the very point of retreating down the steps when the door was flung open, and there swept over me the most exquisite relief I have ever known.

It was a new butler who stood before me.

"Well?"

He did not actually speak the word, but he had a pair of those expressive, beetling eyebrows, and they said it for him. A most forbidding man, fully as grim and austere as his predecessor.

"I wish to see Mr. Wassick," I said, firmly.

The butler's manner betrayed no cordiality, but he evidently saw that I was not to be trifled with. He led the way down that familiar hall, and presently I was in the drawing-room, being inspected once more by

the six Pekingese, who, as on that other occasion, left their baskets, smelt me, registered disappointment, and made for their baskets again.

"What name shall I say, sir?"

I was not to be had like that.

"Mr. Wassick is expecting me," I replied, coldly.

"Very good, sir."

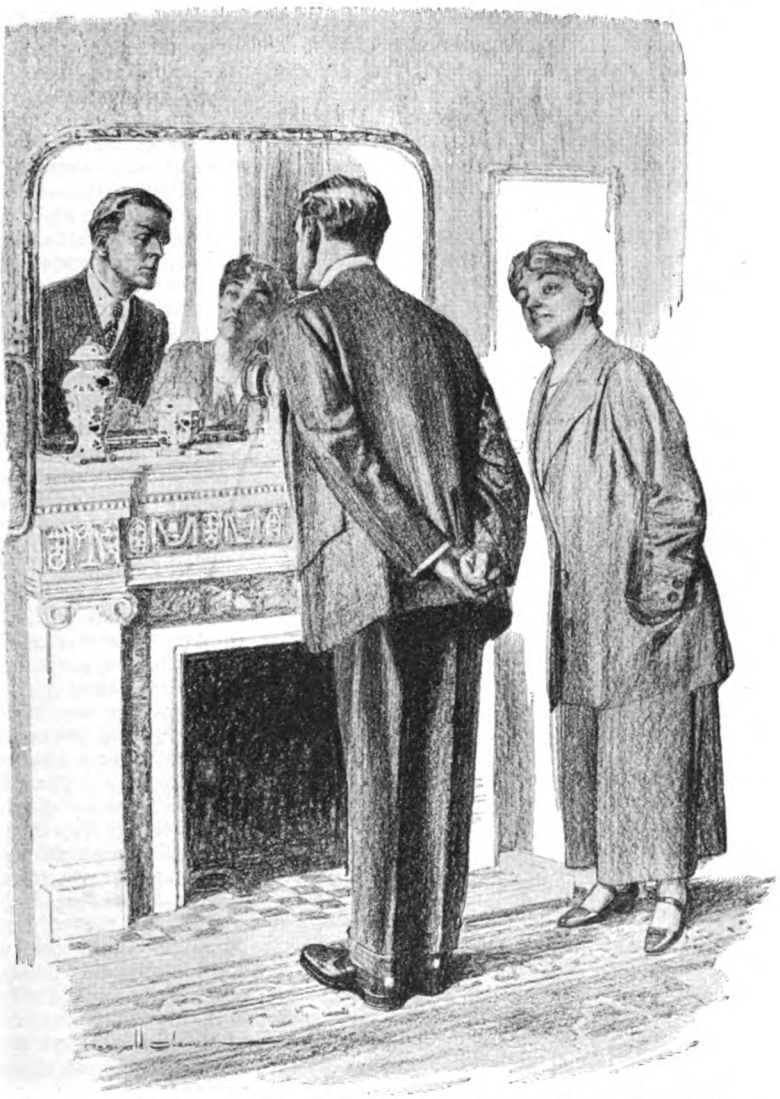
I strolled buoyantly about the room, inspecting this object and that. I hummed lightly. I spoke kindly to the Pekes.

"Hullo, you Pekes!" I said.

I sauntered over to the mantelpiece, over which was a mirror. I was gazing at myself and thinking that it was not such a bad sort of face—not handsome, perhaps, but with a sort of something about it—when of a sudden the mirror reflected something else.

That something was the figure of that popular novelist and well-known after-dinner speaker, Miss Julia Ukridge.

"Good morning," she said.



I was gazing at myself and thinking that it was not such a bad sort of face, when the mirror reflected something else.

It is curious how often the gods who make sport of us poor humans defeat their own ends by overdoing the thing. Any *contre-temps* less awful than this, however slightly less awful, would undoubtedly have left me as limp as a sheet of carbon paper, rattled and stammering, in prime condition to be made sport of. But as it was I found myself strangely cool. I had a subconscious feeling that there would be a reaction later, and that the next time I looked in a mirror I should find my hair strangely whitened, but for the moment I was unnaturally composed, and my brain buzzed like a circular-saw in an ice-box.

"How do you do?" I heard myself say. My voice seemed to come from a long distance, but it was steady and even pleasing in *timbre*.

"You wished to see me, Mr. Corcoran?"

"Yes."

"Then why," inquired Miss Ukridge, softly, "did you ask for my secretary?"

There was that same acid sub-tinkle in her voice which had been there at our previous battle in the same ring. But that odd alertness stood by me well.

"I understood that you were out of town," I said.

"Who told you that?"

"They were saying so at the Savage Club the other night." This seemed to hold her.

"Why did you wish to see me?" she asked, baffled by my ready intelligence.

"I hoped to get a few facts concerning your proposed lecture tour in America."

"How did you know that I was about to lecture in America?" I raised my eyebrows. This was childish.

"They were saying so at the Savage Club," I replied. Baffled again.

"I had an idea, Mr. Corcoran," she said, with a nasty gleam in her blue eyes, "that you might be the person alluded to in my nephew Stanley's telegram."

"Telegram?"

"Yes. I altered my plans and returned to London last night instead of waiting till this evening, and I had scarcely arrived when a telegram came, signed Ukridge, from the village where I had been staying. It instructed my secretary to hand over to a gentleman who would call this morning the draft of the speech which I am to deliver at the dinner of the Pen and Ink Club. I assume the thing to have been some obscure practical joke on the part of my nephew Stanley. And I also assumed, Mr. Corcoran, that you must be the gentleman alluded to."

I could parry this sort of stuff all day.

"What an odd idea!" I said.

"You think it odd? Then why did you tell my butler that my secretary was expecting you?"

It was the worst one yet, but I blocked it.

"The man must have misunderstood me. He seemed," I added, loftily, "an unintelligent sort of fellow."

Our eyes met in silent conflict for a brief instant, but all was well. Julia Ukridge was a civilized woman, and this handicapped her in the contest. For people may say what they like about the artificialities of modern civilization and hold its hypocrisies up to scorn, but there is no denying that it has one outstanding merit. Whatever its defects, civilization prevents a gently-bred lady of high standing in the literary world from calling a man a liar and punching him on the nose, however convinced she may be that he deserves it. Miss Ukridge's hands twitched, her lips tightened, and her eyes gleamed bluely—but she restrained herself. She shrugged her shoulders.

"What do you wish to know about my lecture tour?" she said.

It was the white flag.

UKRIDGE and I had arranged to dine together at the Regent Grill Room that night and celebrate the happy ending of his troubles. I was first at the tryst, and my heart bled for my poor friend as I noted the care-free way in which he ambled up the aisle to our table. I broke the bad news as gently as I could, and the man sagged like a filleted fish. It was not a cheery meal. I extended myself as host, plying him with rich foods and spirited young wines, but he would not be comforted. The only remark he contributed to the conversation, outside of scattered monosyllables, occurred as the waiter retired with the cigar-box.

"What's the time, Corky, old man?"

I looked at my watch.

"Just on half-past nine."

"About now," said Ukridge, dully, "my aunt is starting to give the old lady an earful!"

LADY LAKENHEATH was never, even at the best of times, what I should call a sparkling woman, but it seemed to me, as I sat with her at tea on the following afternoon, that her manner was more sombre than usual. She had all the earmarks of a woman who has had disturbing news. She looked, in fact, exactly like a woman who has been told by the aunt of the man who is endeavouring to marry into her respectable family the true character of that individual.

It was not easy in the circumstances to keep the ball rolling on the subject of the 'Mgomo-'Mgomos, but I was struggling bravely, when the last thing happened which I should have predicted.

"Mr. Ukridge," announced the maid.

That Ukridge should be here at all was astounding; but that he should bustle in, as he did, with that same air of being the household pet which had marked his demeanour at our first meeting in this drawing-room soared into the very empyrean of the inexplicable. So acutely was I affected by the spectacle of this man, whom I had left on the previous night a broken hulk, behaving with the ebullience of an honoured member of the family, that I did what I had been on the verge of doing every time I had partaken of Lady Lakenheath's hospitality—upset my tea.

"I wonder," said Ukridge, plunging into speech with the same old breezy abruptness, "if this stuff would be any good, Aunt Elizabeth."

I had got my cup balanced again as he started speaking, but at the sound of this affectionate address over it went again. Only a juggler of long experience could have manipulated Lady Lakenheath's miniature cups and saucers successfully under the stress of emotions such as I was experiencing.

"What is it, Stanley?" asked Lady Lakenheath, with a flicker of interest.

They were bending their heads over a bottle which Ukridge had pulled out of his pocket.

"It's some new stuff, Aunt Elizabeth.

Just put on the market. Said to be excellent for parrots. Might be worth trying."

"It is exceedingly thoughtful of you, Stanley, to have brought it," said Lady Lakenheath, warmly. "And I shall certainly try the effect of a dose if Leonard has another seizure. Fortunately, he seems almost himself again this afternoon."

"Splendid!"

"My parrot," said Lady Lakenheath, including me in the conversation, "had a most peculiar attack last night. I cannot account for it. His health has always been so particularly good. I was dressing for dinner at the time, and so was not present at the outset of the seizure, but my niece, who was an eye-witness of what occurred, tells me he behaved in a most unusual way. Quite suddenly, it appears, he started to sing very excitedly; then, after awhile, he stopped in the middle of a bar and appeared to be suffering. My niece, who is a most warm-hearted girl, was naturally exceedingly alarmed. She ran to fetch me, and when I came down poor Leonard was leaning against the side of his cage in an attitude of complete exhaustion, and all he would say was, 'Have a nut!' He repeated this several times in a low voice, and then closed his eyes and tumbled off his perch. I was up half the night with him, but now he seems mercifully to have turned the corner. This afternoon he is almost his old bright self again, and has been talking in Swahili, always a sign that he is feeling cheerful."

I murmured my condolences and congratulations.

"It was particularly unfortunate," observed Ukridge, sympathetically, "that the thing should have happened last night, because it prevented Aunt Elizabeth going to the Pen and Ink Club dinner."

"What!" Fortunately I had set down my cup by this time.

"Yes," said Lady Lakenheath, regretfully. "And I had been so looking forward to meeting Stanley's aunt there. Miss Julia Ukridge, the novelist. I have been an admirer of hers for many years. But, with Leonard in this terrible state, naturally I could not stir from the house. His claims were paramount. I shall have to wait till Miss Ukridge returns from America."

'Next April," murmured Ukridge, softly.

"I think, if you will excuse me now, Mr. Corcoran, I will just run up and see how Leonard is."

The door closed.

"Laddie," said Ukridge, solemnly, "doesn't this just show——"

I gazed at him accusingly.

"Did you poison that parrot?"

"Me? Poison the parrot? Of course I didn't poison the parrot. The whole thing was due to an act of mistaken kindness carried out in a spirit of the purest altruism. And, as I was saying, doesn't it just show that no little act of kindness, however trivial, is ever wasted in the great scheme of things? One might have supposed that when I brought the old lady that bottle of Peppo the thing would have begun and ended there with a few conventional words of thanks. But mark, laddie, how all things work together for good. Millie, who, between ourselves, is absolutely a girl in a million, happened to think the bird was looking a bit off colour last night, and with a kindly anxiety to do him a bit of good gave him a slice of bread soaked in Peppo. Thought it might brace him up. Now, what they put in that stuff, old man, I don't know, but the fact remains that the bird almost instantly became perfectly pie-eyed. You have heard the old lady's account of the affair, but, believe me, she doesn't know one half of it. Millie informs me that Leonard's behaviour had to be seen to be believed. When the old lady came down he was practically in a drunken stupor, and all to-day he has been suffering from a shocking head. If he's really sitting up and taking notice again, it simply means that he has worked off one of the finest hangovers of the age. Let this be a lesson to you, laddie, never to let a day go by without its act of kindness. What's the time, old horse?"

"Getting on for five."

Ukridge seemed to muse for a moment, and a happy smile irradiated his face.

"About now," he said, complacently, "my aunt is out in the Channel somewhere. And I see by the morning paper that there is a nasty gale blowing up from the south-east!"

THE END.

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—10.

The DEAD MAN'S TALE

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. HILEY

AN hour before dawn the deep silence of the night was broken by the melancholy call of the crested herons roosting in the fir trees of the hotel gardens at Algeciras. A man who had been standing motionless for over an hour on the stone balcony of a small villa, his pale face and white shirt-front gleaming against the heavy darkness, turned abruptly away and disappeared into the room behind. He adjusted the electric light with unsteady fingers. The woman whose graceful shape lay outlined underneath the bedclothes woke with a yawn. She looked at the man and the sleepiness vanished from her eyes. She sat up in bed and gazed at him a little petulantly.

"Joseph," she exclaimed, "what is wrong? Haven't you been to bed all night?"

He made no answer, and the longer the silence the nearer her petulance grew to anger and alarm.

"Is it the end?" she cried, throwing off the silken coverlet and swinging herself on to the side of the bed. "What has happened? I hear nothing."

The man spoke. His voice sounded hard and cracked. He had lost the splendid imperturbability of conscious power.

"Judith," he confessed, "I have spent horrible hours. A thought like an adder has stolen into my brain. Am I mad? Are we both mad?"

"Mad!" she repeated, looking hard at him.

"What have we done.? Why are we hiding? My brain is full of hazy thoughts. I have had the surgeon's nightmare. I dreamed that I operated on sound men, that my knife was always seeking for their brains, for some phantasmal reason."

She wrapped her dressing-gown around her. She was shivering with cold.

"Phantasmal!" she repeated. "Why do you stay out in the dark and brood when bed is warm and sleep is good? You are the greatest surgeon in the world," she went on, soothingly. "You have only done what you had a right to do. Undress, and come and sleep, Joseph."

"A right!" he repeated, his eyes fixed and glaring. "Judith, for a moment it seemed to me as though a shutter had been lifted from before my eyes. Why did we leave Dredley? What became of that young man, a waiter at Shoreborough, who brought me my *Lancet*, and the boy who was bicycling across Salisbury Plain? Then there was that Worton man, too, and the cipher reader who escaped. Why were they all so terrified? I have heard their screams coming across the bay as I stood out in the darkness. What was it all about, Judith?"

"It was nothing," she assured him. "You only asked of ungrateful men—you, who have saved hundreds of lives—you only asked of one or two of them a moment upon the table, a flick of the knife."

"But why?" he persisted. "I can't remember why."

"To repair the damage to your own brain," she reminded him, wonderingly. "The little discoloured spot. Only wherever you search there is always the patch of red. Do you remember how disappointed you were?"

"The patch of red," he repeated. "Stop! It is true, then. I *am* mad."

Copyright, 1924, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

"You terrify me," she muttered, watching him stealthily.

"I have been mad," he groaned. "The very idea you speak of is the idea of a madman. I have murdered innocent people."

"Pooh!" she scoffed. "Only one or two. Most of them escaped. Think of the thousands whose lives you saved. Lie down and rest. You're making yourself ill about a trifle."

"If it is a trifle," he answered, hoarsely, "how is it that we plot and scheme and hide? How is it that we go always in terror, always hiding from these men, from the girl?"

"They are our enemies," she admitted. "They are very unreasonable people—and I liked the soldier, too. It was my fault that you did not kill him. Some day we must get rid of them all and have peace."

"Peace!" he muttered. "Peace!"

She threw off her dressing-gown and curled herself up in bed again.

"You make my head ache," she complained. "I have never been able to think much since the guns stopped. Come to bed, Joseph, or go to your own room. I am weary."

He turned away. Already her eyes were closed and she was breathing regularly, sleeping like a child, ignorant of evil, full of confidence in the morrow. And on the morrow he had forgotten.

WHEN morning came she had conceived a wonderful idea. As they breakfasted in a sunny corner of the balcony she leaned back in her seat and studied him. He was looking pinched and white. He was losing flesh, and his eyes had sunken. He was like a man with whom the shadow of a great fear sometimes dwelt. She, on the other hand, seemed to be still inheriting her unexpected gift of marvellous beauty.

"You seem tired," she observed, fencing of a subtle purpose, to see if he would speak of the night before.

"I slept ill," he confessed. "Very ill. The night was full of shadows and nightmares."

"Do you remember them?" she asked.

"No," he answered, "only vaguely. Yet there's one thing I'm sure of—the whole world stinks of ingratitude. I know that I am in danger just because I seek to repair the brain I gave to my country."

"Listen," she enjoined. "I have been thinking. I am going now to dress. Be ready to walk with me when I return. I have an idea."

Presently they climbed the hill at the back of the villa. Towards the top, leaning to the sun, was a square enclosure, bordered by a white wall, and containing a hundred or more graves, some new, some old, some adorned with faded flowers, some neglected. They leaned over the wall and she laid her hand upon his arm.

"Now listen to me, Joseph," she said. "These people all make such stupid trouble over a trifle. Why not the brain of a dead man? There could be no trouble, no offence against the laws."

His eyes were bright as steel, hard and eager.

"A dead man!" he repeated.

"Why not?" she argued. "Can't you see that you will have even a better chance? The scarlet patch will have faded with death."

"True!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "Quite true! A dead man would do. If it were within twenty-four hours there would be no danger whatever."

"There you are, then," she cried, with a little wave of the hand. "The ghosts cannot rise against us."

"Wonderful!" he muttered, looking eagerly over the wall. "But how to get them? They bury deep in Spain."

She clutched his arm, drew him round, and pointed down below to a hovel by the seashore, a plastered structure, thatch-covered and banked with weeds. There were fishing nets spread out in front. On the beach a few yards away a small fishing boat, with a black sail, rode at anchor.

"You know what they call the three men who live alone there?" she reminded him. "The three devils. They have all been in prison. They are all outcasts. The respectable fishermen will have nothing to say to them. Let them do your work on dark nights, and afterwards—when you have finished—they can sail out beyond the bay and drop what remains into the bottom of the Mediterranean."

He looked at her almost with reverence.

"Judith," he confessed, "I have sometimes done you a wrong in my thoughts. You have had a great idea—a wonderful idea," he added, portentously. "If I can once be sane again, even for one year, no one will ever raise a finger against me, because I can show the world things it never even dreams of now. I am all the time on the threshold of great discoveries. I can abolish disease, I can extend the span of human life. All that I need is just that missing gleam of reason. I must have it! I will have it!"

She drew him down the hillside.

"The brothers are there, all three of them," she pointed out. "Your Spanish is good enough to make them understand. There is not one of them who would not sell his soul for a few pesetas."

"They shall have more than a few pesetas," he cried, excitedly. "They shall be my men."

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS WORTON, K.C.B., D.S.O., was giving a small farewell dinner-party at Mario's famous club-restaurant in London, at which Daniel Rocke and Ann were the only guests. The wine was good, the dinner excellent, and everybody, on the surface, at any rate, was cheerful. The centre of the room was being cleared for dancing.

"So we're going to lose you for a time, Sir Francis?" Ann remarked.

He nodded, a little gloomily.

"The doctor insists," he said. "I haven't any particular desire to go. In fact, I would rather stay in England just now."

"I can't think why," she observed, with a little shiver. "Think of the rain and sleet outside. Three dreary months ahead of us. Ugh!"

"I could tell you why," he whispered, leaning towards her.

"Where are you going to?" she asked, quickly.

"To Gibraltar," he replied. "My cousin is Governor there, and I shall stay with him for a day or two, and afterwards at Algeciras. . . . Do you remember who this is?"

Ann glanced at the little party of new arrivals. Foremost amongst them, very correctly dressed, very good-looking, still a little self-satisfied, came Captain Milton, the Chief Constable of Shoreborough. He strolled across towards them as soon as the other members of the party had found seats and exchanged casual greetings.

"So the miracle happened after all," Sir Francis reminded him, a little dryly. "The little petrol boat was never heard of again."

"I won't admit the miracle," was the prompt reply. "I said that escape for that man and woman was an impossibility. All reasonable harbours and landing-places were barred to them. There was nothing to prevent their making for the mid-Atlantic, though, and dying of hunger or thirst or being swamped."

"You think, then, that that is what happened?" Daniel asked.

"There isn't the slightest doubt about it," the other answered, confidently. "The whole area of coast which they could possibly have reached with the capacity of that boat was scoured—everywhere except the bottom of the sea—and I never proposed to go down there to arrest them—outside my sphere of activities, that!"

"I saw both the man and the woman alive and well a few months ago," Ann observed.

"God bless my soul!" Milton exclaimed, incredulously. "Where?"

"They spent last winter in Monte Carlo," Ann told him.

"The same people? You're sure of that?"

"Quite sure. I dined at their villa."

"But surely you did something about it?" he demanded.

"I did what I could," Ann replied. "I've come to the conclusion that lunatics are too full of cunning to be dealt with by ordinary human beings like us."

"You mean that they got away again?"

"They got away again," she admitted.

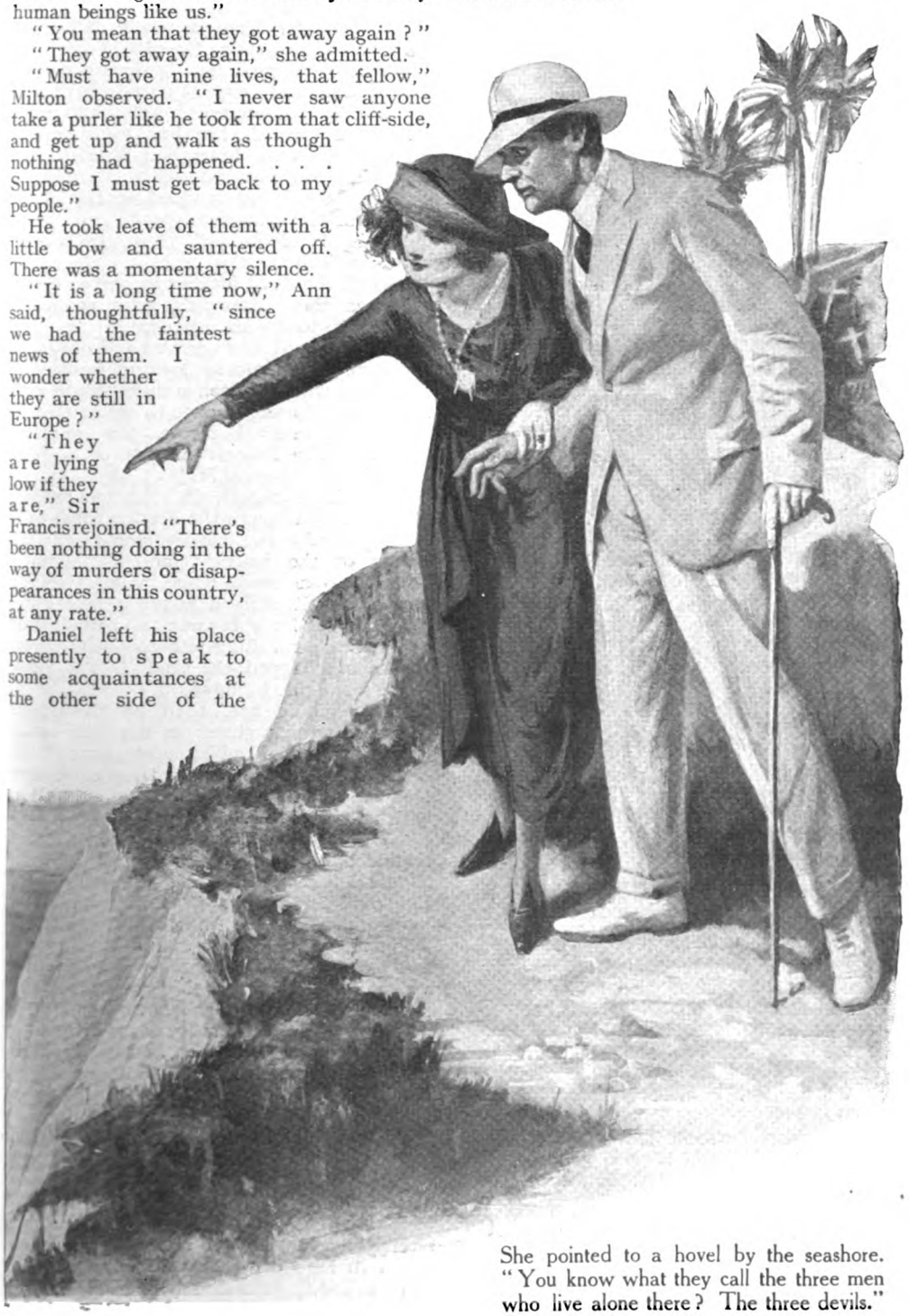
"Must have nine lives, that fellow," Milton observed. "I never saw anyone take a purler like he took from that cliff-side, and get up and walk as though nothing had happened. . . . Suppose I must get back to my people."

He took leave of them with a little bow and sauntered off. There was a momentary silence.

"It is a long time now," Ann said, thoughtfully, "since we had the faintest news of them. I wonder whether they are still in Europe?"

"They are lying low if they are," Sir Francis rejoined. "There's been nothing doing in the way of murders or disappearances in this country, at any rate."

Daniel left his place presently to speak to some acquaintances at the other side of the room. Ann and her companion sat for an unusual length of time in silence. Suddenly he turned to her.



She pointed to a hovel by the seashore. "You know what they call the three men who live alone there? The three devils."

"Miss Lancaster," he began, "I think you can guess what I'm going to say to you."

"I'm afraid so," she admitted.

"Then I am already answered," he sighed. "I know that I am too old for you, and there must be many obstacles from your point of view, but I think you know how it has been with me lately. I am fonder of you than of anyone else in the world. Will you marry me?"

She shook her head. It was a crisis which she had long since despaired of warding off.

"I am so sorry," she told him. "It is very generous of you to ask me, but you see I have my own little secret. There is someone else."

"You are engaged?" he asked, quickly.

She shook her head.

"I am not engaged because the man I am fond of has never asked me, and I am afraid he won't unless I put it into his head. But, in any case, I have sworn, and I mean to keep my oath, that I will never marry anyone while Joseph Londe is alive and free."

"Isn't that rather a foolish vow?" he protested. "From your own point of view, I mean. You may miss so many years of happiness—the years that I fear I have missed," he added, regretfully.

"I have faith," she answered. "Besides, as I told you, the man whom I could marry doesn't know anything about it yet. I'm not sure that he has even thought about me that way."

"For his own sake, I hope he won't wait until it is too late," Worton said, a little sadly. "Do you care to dance?"

A WEEK later, when Daniel handed her the following telegram which he had just received from Gibraltar, she knew quite well that her faith was about to be justified:—

"Come out here by Friday's P. and O. boat from Tilbury. Don't fail me. Have made the great discovery, but may still need your help."

Sir Francis met them in the Governor's brass-funnelled launch, and made his way on board as soon as the great liner had dropped her anchor.

"Well," he exclaimed, as he shook hands, "what did you think of my thunderbolt?"

"We want to know everything, please," Ann begged.

"You shall, within half an hour," he promised. "But not a word yet. We are going straight across to Algeciras."

"But——"

"Not a word yet," he insisted. "Tell your bedroom stewards to put your luggage on the launch at once. They want to push us off as quickly as possible. I'll be at the gangway. I promised them we'd be away in five minutes."

In little more than that time they were racing across the deep blue water of the bay. Still Sir Francis would tell them nothing. They were at the pier in a quarter of an hour, through the Customs a minute or two later, and drove at once to the hotel. By degrees the sternness left Ann's face, her eyes softened, her lips were parted. The quaintly-built hotel, half Spanish, half Moorish, was covered with a magenta creeper. Giant palms stood motionless in the warm tropical atmosphere.

"This is Paradise," Ann exclaimed, enthusiastically.

"With the devil lurking in one corner of it," was their cicerone's grim comment. "Come up to my sitting-room."

They followed him upstairs and out on to a quaint stone balcony looking westwards. A marine, who had been standing there with a telescope, sprang at once to attention.

"Guard relieved for a few minutes, Nichols," Sir Francis announced. "I'll call you when I come in."

"Nothing to report, sir," the man replied, disappearing through the French windows.

The three stood side by side in the far corner of the balcony, and Sir Francis pointed to a small white villa, standing out on a spit of land about a mile away towards Tariffa. It was a plainly-built house, but beautifully situated—the waters of the bay lapped the sands, a few yards away from the windows.

"There they are, both of them," he declared, with a glitter in his eyes which few things in life had brought there. "We have them trapped. Why they came here Heaven only knows, but I have seen them with my own eyes. Trapped!"

"We've thought that before," Daniel reminded him.

"This time we are taking no risks," was the confident reply. "Londe is there, like a rat in his hole. An extradition warrant is on its way out now and may arrive at any moment. If he crosses to Gib. he will be arrested on the quay. My cousin has lent me a dozen marines—fine fellows—and two of them are always within fifty yards of his door. There isn't a car in the shed, and both garages have been warned not to let one out on any conditions. Furthermore, there isn't a petrol boat to be had for love or money."

"How did he get here?" Ann asked.

"He landed in Portugal," Sir Francis explained, "probably in the yacht he had at Monte Carlo. I've collected quite a lot of information. He had the yacht painted, altered her name, and sold her to a Jew dealer in Lisbon at half price, no questions to be asked."

"Has there been any trouble since their arrival?" Daniel inquired.

Sir Francis hesitated.

"Not exactly trouble," he replied, "but something curious has happened. We will speak of that after luncheon. We'll go and see about your rooms now. Afterwards I'll take you for a little walk."

AFTER lunch Sir Francis led them through the gardens, along a strip of dusty road, to a bare, rolling stretch of stony land, on which grew little save an occasional cactus plant and a stunted patch of scrub. Half-way down to the sea was a cemetery, enclosed by a white-plastered wall, with an occasional minaret of blue stone. A funeral was even then in progress and a group of black-clad peasants were gathering round an open grave. The solemn words of the prayer, slowly and reverently uttered by the bare-headed priest, reached their ears with curious distinctness. A little apart stood the widow, sobbing bitterly, a stout dark woman, pallid, with a deep growth upon her upper lip, and a fire in her eyes which even her tears could not dim.

"I brought you here because of a curious idea I had," Sir Francis confided, after the ceremony was over and the melancholy little procession had departed. "I think I told you that amongst my few accomplishments is a knowledge of Spanish. I've been very interested during the last week in hearing the gossip of some of these peasants. They say that the devil has been walking in the cemetery. There have been curious foot-prints and disturbances around the graves. The people here are very superstitious, and I was really surprised to see a funeral taking place at all."

Ann shivered a little. It was Daniel who asked the question.

"You think that Londe——"

"I suspect something of the sort," Sir Francis admitted. "One can't pretend to follow the workings of such a brain as his, but one can easily imagine that his craving to use the knife is insatiable. A cemetery close at hand would always be a temptation."

"Horrible!" Ann exclaimed.

"We draw near to the end," Sir Francis said. "To-morrow I expect the warrant."

But to-morrow brought nothing except a storm from the sea, a grey mistral which sent them shivering indoors, to enjoy the luxury of a wood fire, and kept them there most of the day. In the afternoon came a telegram which Worton tore open eagerly. He passed it over with an air of satisfaction.

"The warrant is granted," he announced. "It will be here to-morrow night."

Even then the sense of restlessness pursued them. A little before dusk they donned mackintoshes and walked out along the sea road to watch the waves break against the quay.

At the last bend they came face to face with Judith. They stopped short. So did she. She was wearing a seaman's mackintosh and south-wester, and the rain was dripping from her, but in those few startled seconds the three of them had but the one thought—the amazing beauty of this woman. She showed not the slightest sign of embarrassment or fear. She looked at no one but Sir Francis, and her eyes glowed as she laughed into his face.

"Have you come for me at last?" she asked. "I expected you long ago. I am ready."

Sir Francis could find no coherent words, but she scarcely waited to listen. She came close to him. Her voice was lowered almost to a whisper, but the music of it remained, and the soft invitation of her presence.

"Something has happened to Joseph," she confided. "All day long he sits and mutters. There are terrible things in his eyes. He seems to be surrounded by invisible people whom he is always trying to push away. Sometimes he looks at me as though he hated me. Shall I tell you what I think is coming to him?"

"Tell me," Worton invited.

"I think that he is going sane," she declared. "It is too terrible. I cannot stay with him any longer. The sunshine here warms my heart, makes me feel young and happy, and he is like a frozen statue of horror. I'm glad that you have come at last. Listen! What's that?"

She broke off in sudden fear. A murmur of voices drifted up to them from the beach. They moved to the side of the road. Below, on the sands, close to the edge of the sea, a group of people were standing round an object that had just been washed ashore. A man, almost black, from his mixed race and generations of the baking sun, was gesticulating fiercely. He had a black beard, a mass of black hair, a skin withered and scorched—a remnant of his Moorish ancestry. To all appearance he was on the defensive, and there was evil threatening him—evil in the faces and shouting of the little crowd by which he was surrounded. Foremost amongst them was the widow of two days before, a shaking monument of ever-growing fury, her eyes burning fires, her flesh quivering. She seemed to gather the new-comers into her declamation as she swung backwards and forwards an empty sack.

"Listen, all of you, and tell me what it may mean," she cried. "Here was José, husband of mine, father of my boys, buried

but yesterday. Dead he was, as you all know, of the fever that eats out the heart. Buried he was, as you all saw. And now, behold his corpse washed in from the sea, and his head, his dear head ! "

" What have I to do with this ? " cried Pedro, the man with the black skin of a Moor. " It is the devil who took him from his grave, none other."

" You lie, you foul son of a swine ! " the woman shouted, suddenly brandishing the sack in one hand and a knife in the other. " He was washed ashore with this sack tied to him, in which there have been stones, and it is your sack, Pedro—yours, you robber of graves, you mutilator of the dead ! "

She sprang at him, her knife a line of glittering fire. Pedro fell on his knees.

" I will tell the truth ! " he screamed.

The woman paused. Perhaps, even at the height of her passion, curiosity prevailed. Pedro pointed to the body.

" It is the señor at the villa by the sea," he declared. " He gives a thousand pesetas for a dead body out of which the life has only just gone. It is for the science. See, he comes. Spare your anger, Marguerita, widow of José. It is a hard world, and for a thousand pesetas—why, José himself would have murdered his friend for that ! "

The woman seemed tongue-tied. There was a mutter from one or two in the crowd, but no one spoke. Towards them, across the sands, came Londe, quiet, composed, ignorant apparently of what had happened. Ann found herself shaking in every limb. This must be the end, she told herself. There could be no escape. Her hand touched Daniel's arm and found it tense and hard. In his right hand he was gripping an automatic pistol. Sir Francis had detached himself a little, and the light of the hunter was keen in his eyes. So Londe came on to his final end—not death at the hands of Daniel or Worton, men of their word and pledged to kill—but at the hand of the least of his victims. About half-a-dozen paces from the outskirts of the little group he paused. He probably did not for a moment doubt his ability to quell the tumult, even after Pedro had betrayed him, but he suddenly saw Ann, with Daniel by her side, and Worton in the background. Afterwards they all of them shared a peculiar conviction with regard to those few moments. They saw a sudden gleam of light in Londe's eyes, a terrible self-revealing fire of remorse. The whole expression of his face changed—its strength, the brute strength of lunacy, failed him. They all believed that in those few seconds he was sane, that the curtain of his distorted vision was momentarily raised. If this were indeed so he must have welcomed death. The woman sprang at him with a lightness and force which were amazing. For a moment they saw the thread of steel descending, heard one long-drawn-out cry—and that was the end. But while they stood there paralysed—the woman made sure.

BOTH Ann and Daniel were conscious of a certain emptiness of outlook on that first morning back in the office. Daniel went through his letters methodically, read the paper for some short time, and rang the bell. Ann came in, notebook in hand.

" There is a paragraph here," he said, " which I think should interest you."

UNIQUE INCIDENT
AT YESTERDAY'S
MEETING OF THE BRITISH
MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Yesterday, at the opening of the proceedings of the ninety-fifth meeting of the British Medical Society, the Chairman, Lord Randall, announced that he proposed to establish an altogether unheard-of precedent, by himself reading a paper entitled " The Isolation of Insanity," sent to him, he frankly admitted, by an anonymous correspondent. The paper, a full report of which will be found in another column, created a great sensation, and, if the various theories enunciated can be sustained, will throw an altogether fresh light upon the study of brain failure. It is believed, although no name was attached to the manuscript, that the author was the late Sir Joseph Londe, Bart., who was murdered a short time ago under tragical circumstances at Algeciras.

" Amazing ! " she exclaimed.

" And, Ann," he went on, " there is a letter here from the solicitor who took charge of Londe's affairs. It seems that there was plenty of money after all. Judith Londe was moved into a private asylum yesterday. They say that she seems quite happy and contented."

" I am glad," she murmured, momentarily startled by his use of her Christian name.

" And furthermore," he continued, " I have decided to close this office and go round the world."

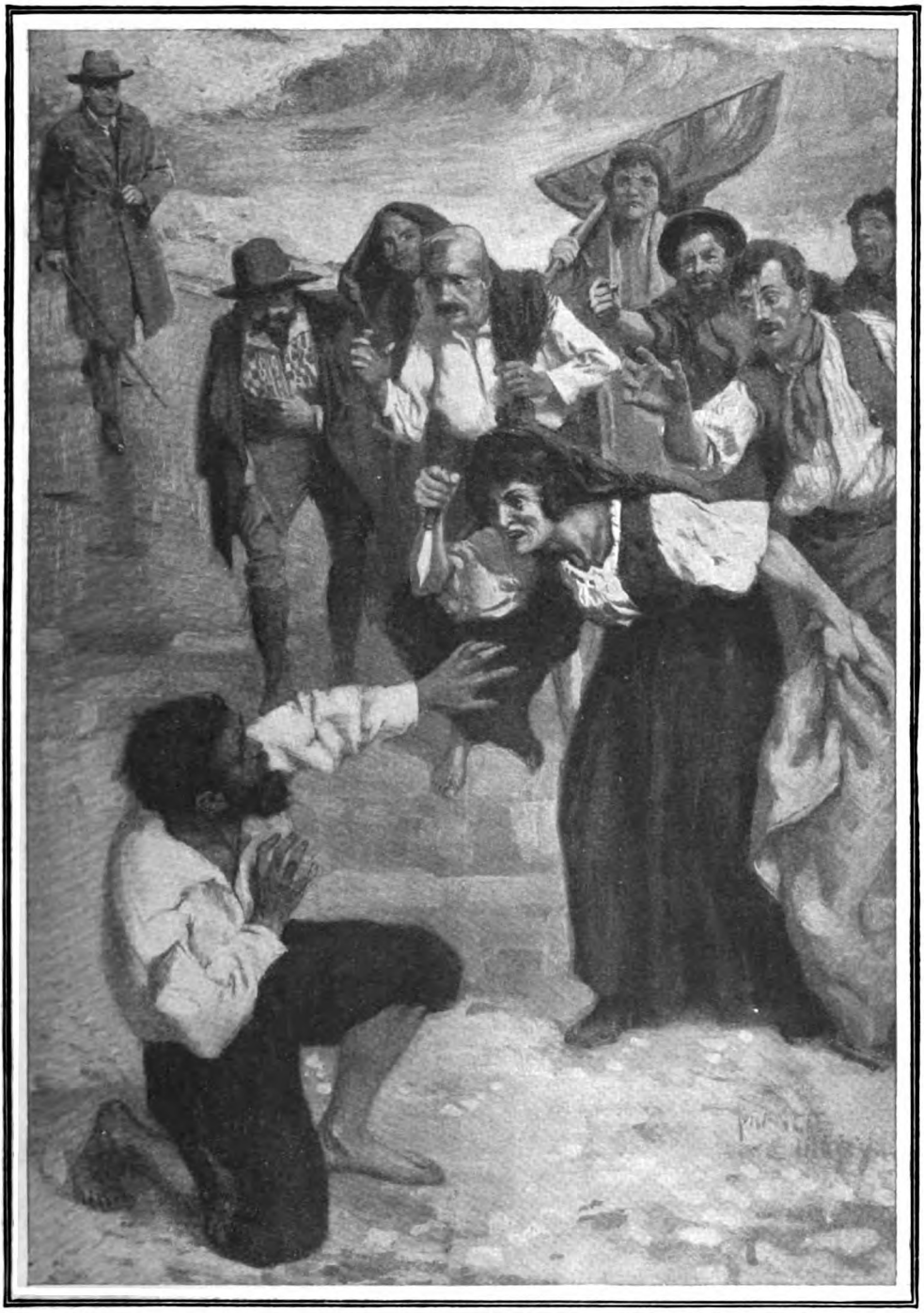
" Shall you need a secretary ? " she asked.

" I should like you to accompany me in another capacity," he replied.

She laid down the book, trembling.

" I am rather a clumsy wooer, I'm afraid," he confessed, " but I want you to come as my wife."

" I don't know about being clumsy," she answered, " but you certainly have been—dilatory."

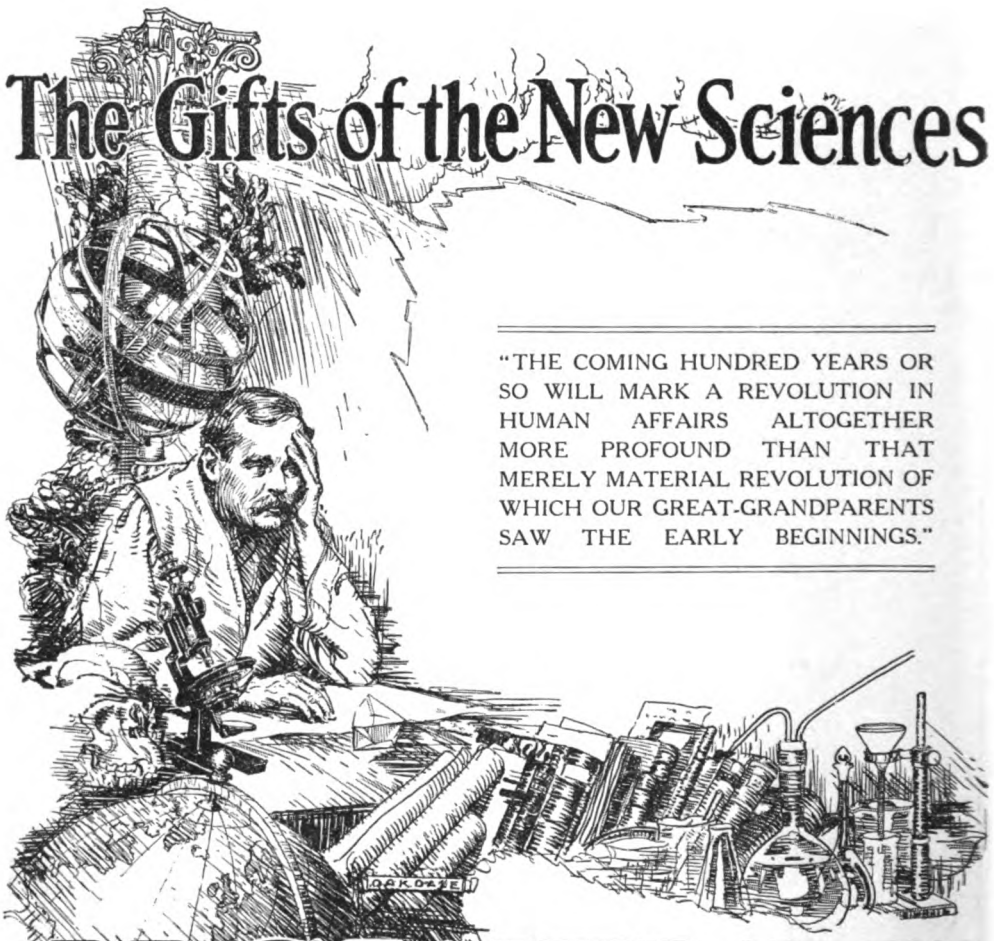


She sprang at him, her knife a line of glittering fire. Pedro fell on his knees. "I will tell the truth!" he screamed.

"You knew all about it without my telling you," he insisted.

"That didn't help much. A woman always likes to be told," was her last word.

The Gifts of the New Sciences



"THE COMING HUNDRED YEARS OR SO WILL MARK A REVOLUTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS ALTOGETHER MORE PROFOUND THAN THAT MERELY MATERIAL REVOLUTION OF WHICH OUR GREAT-GRANDPARENTS SAW THE EARLY BEGINNINGS."

H.G.WELLS PROPHESIES-

ONE of the most attractive and at the same time most baffling of speculations is to guess about the progress of science and about the possible inventions of the years ahead of us. Baffling and uncertain it is bound to be. As a friend of mine put it, "it is trying to think about what won't be thought of for ever so long." But that is just a little more witty than it is true. Coming inventions cast their shadows before—often shadows that are centuries long—and one may have a reasonable conviction that a tree is going to bear fruit even when the blossom is just budding. Frosts, blights, and suchlike disasters may disappoint the

Copyright, 1924, by H. G. Wells.

most justifiable hopes for a year or even for a succession of years; nevertheless a survey of the possible scientific harvest is well worth making. It may even—to extend our horticultural image—set us spraying or protecting some threatened crop.

The last hundred years has been a century productive on a stupendous scale of mechanical inventions arising out of physical and chemical discoveries. It has been an epoch, a corner in human history. There have been great advances in medicine and surgery also, but these—the use of anæsthetics and antiseptics for example and the applications of microscopy—have been largely by-products of chemical and physical progress. There has also been a great expansion and clarification of biological knowledge, but although this has produced profound effects upon religious thought and moral ideas, it has not yet given any such revolutionary practical results in human affairs as have the inorganic sciences. It has made possible the new developments in psychology upon which I shall have more to say presently, but it has yielded no dividends directly. When we talk of inventions and the triumphs of science it is of steamships and great machines, rapid transport, electricity, wireless, and the aeroplane that we think, and when we turn to the future our first idea is of another shelf-ful of still vaster and more astonishing mechanical contrivances. But that may be just the common error of prophesying by continuing the current movement of things in a straight line. It is quite possible that there may be no further physical or mechanical discoveries of first-class importance forthcoming for a very long time. That at any rate is my own conviction.

NO REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

Of course there will be improvements in detail, increases of efficiency, economies and so forth. The railways may be scrapped, and probably will be scrapped within another half century, as slow and wasteful; we may have a steady improvement in road material; the aeroplane and possibly the airship may go on developing and improving; we may presently transmit pictures as well as sounds by wireless, survey and map the Polar regions, and so forth and so on. But there will be nothing beyond the aeroplane; only an improved aeroplane. Nothing beyond wire-borne or wireless telegraphy; only speedier and more effective transmission. We shall thrash out and make the most of that great harvest of the last hundred years that has come in from the physical field, but from that field I do not believe that there will be any fresh harvest, any *new* things now, any really *revolutionary* changes, for quite a long time.

This will strike some readers as a flat contradiction to much current expectation. They will ask: "What about all these new discoveries in physics about which we have heard so much? What about Einstein? What about the energy of the atom?"

Well, these things, I think, are just the first blossoms of another Spring whose harvest may still be hundreds of years away. We are not likely to get much out of them but wonder for a long time. Einstein has given us a new, a more free and more subtle way of thinking about the space-time system in which we live. But that is unlikely to have any immediate practical reaction upon human life at all. And there is much wild and baseless talk about the possible utilization of atomic energy; but though that is good enough for a fantastic story it is not good enough for a serious discussion of practical developments in the near future. We have come to know that several elements, and possibly most or even all elements in the space-time system we call our universe, are undergoing a steady—and in most cases an extremely slow—process of decomposition which releases energy. And that is a very marvellous thing to realize. We already make a clumsy, half superstitious use of that released energy in the radium treatment in medicine. But nobody has yet made the ghost of the shadow of a suggestion how that process of decomposition might be delayed or accelerated. Current science has no more practical justification for hope that this can be done than that we may presently be able to turn on or turn off the gravitational pull and make things heavier or lighter.

Our universe, which carries us along with it through time, has these characteristics of gravitation and molecular decomposition and we do not know why it has them. They are as blank riddles to the greatest professors of physics and chemistry as they are to us ordinary people. Some day it may begin to dawn upon men why these things are so, and then our race will get to business. But I do not believe that atomic energy is coming into human affairs until such names as Einstein, Curie, and Soddy, and so forth, seem as remote and past as do the names of Archimedes and Hero to-day. Hero, as the reader will remember, described a turbine steam-engine nineteen centuries before it became of any utility. The primary properties of frictional electricity were on record in the time of Aristotle. The fruit of these

curious flowers of knowledge took a score of centuries to ripen.

That first great wasteful harvesting of material science, which has been going on during the past hundred years, is, I believe, drawing to its end. The next is still too far off from our present experience for us even to guess about it. It is in quite other directions now that I think we must look for the next main crop of practical results from scientific thought and research.

MAN WILL TURN HIS PRACTICAL ATTENTION TO HIMSELF.

The past century has been the supreme century of material achievement; the present and the twenty-first centuries will, I believe, be the great fruiting and harvesting time of psychological and physiological science. Man having run all over his world from pole to pole, having learnt how to fly round it in seven or eight days and how to look or speak round it in a flash, will presently, I think, become introspective and turn his practical attention to himself.

Unfortunately, it is necessary nowadays, before one talks in this popular way of psychological science, to make it perfectly plain that one does not intend that term to cover any of that queer traffic in messages from the dead and the like which figures in certain circles as "psychic" science. The whole of this mass of legend and lore is no doubt of interest to the psychologist, but rather because of what it teaches us of the infirmities of the human mind as a truth-seeking, truth-testing instrument than for any light it throws upon the nature of men or things.

For a third of a century since his college days the writer has watched this flow of necromancy, telepathic experiment, and pseudo-scientific inquiry; for some years he was a member of the English Society for Psychical Research; he has observed the exploits of clairvoyants, read occult books, so far as such books are readable, heard the late W. T. Stead relate the adventures of his Double, watched the careers of Sir A. Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, endured the marvellous histories of many inferior story-tellers, and his growing conviction is that in this vast cloud of witnesses, in this fog of unprogressive assertions, there is no grain of any substantial reality, that there is nothing in it at all beyond deliberate fraud, unconscious fraud, self-deception, the will to believe marvels, the craving to be marvellous, the suggestibility of unguarded minds, tricks of divided personalities, uncritical treatment of coincidences and resemblances, the obstinacy of men committed to a view, very ancient traditions about ghosts and magic received as fables and then strengthening to belief, reinforcing legends from the East, hallucinations fostered and welcomed, and, last but not least, the moral decay and imaginative excesses due to the use of drugs. As the years have passed the writer has become less and less interested in the raps

and the scratchings, the enigmatical mutterings of the medium, the automatic scrawlings on the table, and more and more curious and fascinated by the motives and hidden thoughts of those who sat around the revelation. Later on he may be able to deal with this queer world of the psychic investigator; at present he mentions it only to express his complete scepticism of any progress or promise in that world.

THE PROMISE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS.

But what is of the greatest promise in the science of the present time is the new study of human motives which centres about what is called psycho-analysis. The science of psychology as it was presented to me when I took my educational diploma a third of a century ago was about as empty a science as one could well imagine. It was resonantly empty. Sully's "Psychology," the first text book I encountered, a book written by an Englishman of French origin, was as logical and lucid a development of false classifications and negligently observed realities as the Latin mind has ever produced. It was as handsome and impressive as the Eiffel Tower or the Arc de Triomphe, and like those glories it got nowhere and did nothing. Mental phenomena were neatly classified into Thinking and Feeling and Willing; and the methodical assembling of sensations into percepts and of percepts into concepts which it expounded so charmed my sense of order that for quite a long time I did not realize, and indeed it was only after I had read Hoffding and William James that I began to realize, that, as a matter of fact, no such synthesis went on in my mind at all, but quite different and much more complicated processes.

The advances that have been made in psychology since then have been enormous. In the last thirty or forty years psychology has laid out a whole new scheme of foundations. It has passed through a period of establishment very much as the science of physics did in the later seventeenth century, and the science of chemistry in the early nineteenth. Much light has come in from the side of experimental neurology,

H. G. WELLS.

Photo: Compton Collier.

but the greater beginnings of the new psychology lie in the works of Freud and Jung. These two men, so different from each other in character and quality, Freud the homely and absurd and Jung the almost too poetic, will take a place side by side in the history of their field of science comparable to that of Gilbert or Newton or Faraday or Pasteur in their respective fields. They are initiators of primary importance. They have broken up a soil that was previously hard and obdurate, and now it is bearing crops in increasing abundance.

WHAT FREUD AND JUNG WILL LEAD TO.

They have given us a new and mentally most invigorating view of the human being from within, as a system of impulses and counter impulses or restraints; they have enabled people to picture as they were never able to picture before why and how they think and act, why they find some things easy and desirable to do and some things unattractive and hard to do, why they incline to believe this fact and resist the conviction of that fact, and how their conscious life is borne along upon a great stream of unconscious mental activities, the existence of which was scarcely suspected half a century ago. There has also been a great increase in our knowledge of the mind, not simply as an individual mind, but as an associated unit in a mass or group mind. These new methods and new views and new discoveries are evidently recasting our fundamental ideas about the growth, the activity, and the interaction of human minds, and upon that recasting of these ideas I believe that there is bound to follow such a reconstruction of our methods of using our minds, and of education, and of the direction of human associations, as will be comparable to the reconstruction of methods of transport or of metallurgy during the last hundred years due to the application of steam, steel, and electricity to these methods.

The coming hundred years or so will be, I believe, essentially a century of applied psychology, with which a considerable amount of physiological science respecting glands and nervous states, drugs and secretions, will be very closely involved. It will mark a revolution in human affairs altogether more profound and more intimate than that merely material revolution of which our great-grandparents saw the early beginnings and amidst whose achievements we live.

The material revolution of the past century or so first affected the fields and towns and the distribution of the population of the world; it appeared as great railway cuttings, gashing the familiar landscape, bridges, smoking engines, railway stations, gas-works, jerry-building. The new revolution of the coming days appears as a disturbance of the intellectual surface, as a new directness in art that makes much old achievement seem platitudinous, as a more penetrating curiosity in readers and an abandonment of many gracious conventions in literature, as a breach with many of the disciplines and restraints of the past in thought and act, as an increasing tendency to psychologize legal, political, financial, and economic conceptions. It will presently be making more extensive contacts with the common life through the schools of the world. It is already stirring in many schools and in the minds of all the best of our younger teachers.

A NEW SORT OF EDUCATION.

Before very long we shall begin to realize that there is a new sort of education active in the world, a more purposive education, an education bound up with new and clearer ideas of the psychology of economic and political life. There has been a curious discontinuity hitherto between our educational institutions and the realities of life; the former has not led to the latter, but has, on the contrary, rather shrunk from it and away into elegant by-paths. The school has professed to make citizens, but rather it has stimulated a few competitors for success and failed to equip them for the struggle. This is because there has been, and still is, no clear theory of motives in the modern community; our economic and financial life, and much of our social life, has grown up without such a theory, and independently of our schools altogether. But the vague, scrambling, accidental sort of living that makes up the world of men at the present time is not a necessary or permanent condition of things; the human intelligence resents it, and will finally prevail against it. It is no more a permanent condition than the disorders of Germany after the Thirty Years' War and the present disorders of Russia are permanent conditions. All the world to-day is living in a phase of exceptional disintegration and reconstruction. Our schools cannot train our peoples for orderly life because there remains no assured orderly life.

But that state of affairs will not last. The mind of the intelligent teacher rebels against the aimless work he does, the aimless discharge of young people into an uncharted world. Yet he realizes that he cannot educate with any effectiveness unless he has a clear idea of the sort of life for which he is educating. As we reshape our ideas of social justice and relationship, the character of our schools will change and education will realize its aims anew. Schools are a part of statescraft. The same growth of applicable psychology that will give the teacher a real power in developing dominant ideas and training motives in his school will give the world outside the school a conception of political and social organization based on a balance and reconciliation of motives quite beyond the scope of our present understandings.

It is curious how difficult people find it at

present to accept the idea of a mental, as distinguished from a physical, change in human conditions. Nowadays it startles nobody to suggest that it may presently be possible to go to the moon or the centre of the earth for a holiday, or jump into another dimension or prolong the individual life to a hundred and fifty. But the suggestion that presently there may be a sort of education and a sort of social and economic order in the world that will have the same relation to the schooling and politics and law and business of to-day that the Woolworth building or an ocean liner has to the hut or canoe of a savage, is met by an incredulous resistance. They think that the school will always be the dull, tiresome place it is to-day, the teacher the same ineffective, underpaid weakling, business the same loud, disingenuous, and dangerous sprawling scramble, and employment the same distasteful drudgery. They think there will always be the same amount of war, crime, and failure that there is to-day. Yet it is just such an application of the sciences of mental relationship as will change and modify these things directly and profoundly which is the most immediately-probable thing before our race.

YOU CANNOT CHANGE NATURE.

Faced with the forecast that there will presently come a phase in the life of our race when the general behaviour will be as different from, and as much better than, the general behaviour of to-day as that is different from and better than the general behaviour in a cannibal village in Central Africa, most people have been trained to reply that "you cannot alter human nature." That in its way is perfectly true, but it is also perfectly irrelevant. It is not only human nature you cannot change. You cannot change the nature of anything. You cannot change Nature. But in the last hundred years we have learnt to do ten thousand things with Nature we never knew how to do before, and in the coming centuries we shall learn to do ten thousand things with human nature that we cannot do now.

It is because of my belief in the enormous creative and reconstructive power over human motive latent in the science of psychology, and even now being unlocked for our use, that I find myself inclined to be more than a little impatient and disrespectful with the laws, the poor, feeble, silly schools, the flags and political institutions, the economic methods and business tangles that confuse human affairs and darken our days and worry our nights at the present time. I feel in relation to such things much as an American with some gift of vision might have felt in the middle of the last century as he drove his lumbering wagon day after day across the Western prairies in danger of thirst and famine and scalping Indians and disease. Filthy and footsore, anxious and with night coming upon him, he might have had a sudden vision of the great smooth train, brightly lit and well-equipped, and swift and safe, that would carry his grandchildren to and fro across this lonely and frightful desolation. So, too, in this present twilight of human division and insecurity, amidst oppressions and strikes, shortages of goods and slumps in welfare, irreconcilable hatreds and the rumours of fresh wars, it is still possible for those who have faith and vision to foretell a new release of human life to a secure and world-wide peace, to a sufficient and happy production to satisfy all normal human needs, to a common life of generous activities and kindliness and lively interests and enterprise and hope. And it is along the line of a sedulous pursuit and a vigorous application of psychological science that this release is attainable and will be attained.

Let me be a little more explicit about the possible application of a new, invigorated, and growing science of psychology to practical human matters. Consider first how it is that we keep a sort of peace between man and man in our communities and maintain a general understanding of what a man may do and what he may not do. We do this through the law and the law courts, with a certain apparatus of police and so forth added thereto. But the laws that hold us together in a community are the most complicated tangle of traditions, compromises, pedantries, and expediences possible —an out-of-date and discredited tangle. The procedure of our courts is a mixture of tradition, negligence, and slovenliness; the manners of the ordinary barrister towards witnesses, and even towards his own profession, in court are barbaric; the methods of our law have had no effectual revision for ages. A law court takes us back to the Middle Ages; the mediæval gowns, the seventeenth-century wigs, emphasize its stale antiquity. Lawyers cling to the physical discomforts of the past; no other profession would work in the dim, dirty, dusty, untidy offices in which lawyers still evidently delight. Only people upon the verge of lunacy will enter a lawyer's office if they can avoid it. It is like stepping into a seventeenth-century kennel. Nearly everyone who has studied these things agrees also that our prisons are an apparatus for destroying the souls of men, even more antiquated than the law courts which send them thither. The ideas of human misdemeanour that rule in our

courts to-day are hardly in advance of those dominant in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

WHAT CRIMES SPRING FROM.

The crimes that men commit and which bring them under the bludgeonings and torturing restrictions of the law spring only very rarely from any natural blackness in the human heart. The great bulk of offences against property can be immediately traced to that morbid fear of poverty which our economic insecurities engender; most murders and crimes of violence arise from the jealousies and intolerable situations that our ruthless marriage laws produce; a residuum springs from the boredom of living a restricted life in a dull world. Most crimes that lead to prison to-day are really outbreaks due to human distress. If we could eliminate—and we could eliminate—most of that distress, the crimes men would commit would be rare and trivial. And every day our psychological science makes these statements more incontrovertible and points our way more plainly to the relief of human distresses.

It is ridiculous to suppose that these things will remain at their present level. It is ridiculous to suppose that, with a growing armoury of assured knowledge available, the constructive and generous motives latent in man will not presently set about this business of bringing law and the adjustment of human relations up to the level of contemporary science, with at least as much intelligence and resolution as it set about bringing the methods of transport up to that level a century ago.

We know now, at least as certainly as men knew in 1880 that flying machines were possible, that it is possible so to plan production in the world that we could all be far richer and more free and all of us infinitely happier in producing our wealth and freedom than we are to-day. We know with at least an equal certainty that we can so organize the general education in relation to our general economic and political organizations that the bulk of mankind will grow up happily, prepared for lives of creative service. We know that all the international troubles of our time, the mutual injuries of nation and nation, the threat of war, are all due to mental things that can be changed and cured by mental methods: persuasion, suggestion, teaching, and training. But just as in 1880 the common fool was quite sure that we should never fly because no one had done so, so now the common fool is incredulous of social, political, and educational developments he may even live to see and share. And just as flying came slowly and as the achievement of a small faithful minority working in an atmosphere of ridicule, so now it must be the work of a comparatively small body of steadfast believers, in schools and colleges and studies, in law courts and legislatures, in administrative positions and works offices, in the rooms of consultants and the talk of parents, that the new gifts of psychology to mankind must be tried over, worked up, and brought into effective relationship to human life.

THE WORLD IN A.D. 2424.

If I could revisit the world in A.D. 2424, five hundred years from now, I doubt if I should find travel more than twice as fast as it is possible to travel to-day, or any great further developments of material invention, but I am sure that I should find schools that would have the same relation to the schools of to-day that an aeroplane has to the travelling coach that took Sterne to Paris, I should find prisons and lunatic asylums almost completely swept away, I should find the relations of man to man no longer complicated by the intervention of old gentlemen in wigs and scarlet, I should find the economic system unencumbered by a bitter scramble for mere possession, and war a fading tradition in the memories of men. And this I should realize was due to no miracle in men's hearts and souls, and to no great social or political revolution, but simply to the sane, sober, common-sense application, here a step forward and there a step forward, of that scientific study of men's motives which begins so propitiously about us now. I give myself a margin of five hundred years. But it may take much less time for mental science to overtake physical science and bring these things about.

"What is My Secret?"

BY

DENIS MACKAIL

ILLUSTRATED BY F E HILEY

THERE were very few people who did not envy Gerard Poole. Not only was he rich, not only did he possess one of the most beautiful country houses in England, not only was he still under fifty, but—which was, strictly speaking, more enviable still — there was scarcely a newspaper in the British Empire or in America which did not, and had not for years, beslavered him, in season and out of season, with unceasing and unstinted praise.

And all this, as the world never tired of telling, he had wrested himself from the hands of Fortune by the exercise of a profession so easy, so delightful, and so totally free from all the circumscriptions of ordinary work, that one could hardly describe it as a profession at all.

Gerard Poole was, in short, a best-seller. Where other rich men are forced to spend their lives in stuffy offices in the City, grinding away day after day at the same soul-destroying round, he merely crossed the cool, pillared hall of his exquisite home, shut himself into his picturesque study with its view of English river and English hills, and from these ideal surroundings sent forth over the whole of the civilized world a constant stream of his charming, fantastic romances—which in turn brought back to him that charming and fantastic income.

"What is my secret?" he would say to the interviewers who came down to lunch with him. "It is simply this: That I enjoy my work. That, in spite of any success that I may have achieved, I still come to it every morning as freshly as I did when I first began to write. I have had my sorrows and troubles," he would add, glancing up at the portrait of his late wife as he spoke. "Who has not? But my work has been the most wonderful consolation to me. My work and—" (here he would look across the table)—"and my daughter."

And then, as was only natural, the interviewer would look across the table also, and if he were a man he would find the greatest difficulty in listening to anything further that Gerard Poole might say. For Aurea Poole—named after the heroine of her father's first book—was still more beautiful than the beautiful house in which she lived. Even women-interviewers had been known to describe her as "winsome."

After lunch the great man would conduct his visitor into his sanctum.

"Yes," he would say, "though I travel a great deal—as, indeed, my books will tell you—it is always here that I return to set my thoughts on paper. There is something so calm, so peaceful, so—so——"

"Restful," the visitor would suggest.

"Exactly," Gerard Poole would agree. "And now, if you will forgive me, I must

take my afternoon walk. It has indeed been a pleasure to have had this little chat. Please tell your editor how flattered I am that his readers should still take an interest in an old stager like myself. You will send me the proofs of your article, won't you?"

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Poole."

"I find I can so often add just a line—a touch—a suggestion which——"

"Oh, quite, Mr. Poole."

"Very well, then. If you want my photograph, my agents will give it you. I have ordered my car to take you back to the station. Good-bye."

Even the most callous, the most irreverent interviewers could hardly fail to be impressed by this glimpse of luxury and graciousness.

"Dash it," they would mutter, as they drove off in Gerard Poole's limousine, "I don't care what anyone says. He *is* a great man!"

And, when presently it appeared in print, the interview would say exactly the same thing.

IT may come as rather a shock to you, therefore, after this little vision of home life at Broadmead, to learn—as you now must—that Gerard Poole was one of the most utter and out-and-out impostors that even the annals of literature can show. In his reported conversation with those impressionable interviewers it is difficult, indeed, to discover so much as a single word of truth. For not only had he lived a cat-and-dog life with the late Mrs. Poole; not only did he now find his beautiful daughter a thundering nuisance about the house; but also, so far from his "secret" being that he enjoyed his work, it was to be found rather in the fact that he had never so much as written a short story in his whole life.

Wait a moment, though. Even in our horror at this alarming revelation do not let us exaggerate. Twenty years ago—when he was living in lodgings with Rupert Holloway—he *had* written a novel about a blind organist whose granddaughter became queen of the opera stage. "Love's Keepsake" it was called. But it had never been published, and was, as a matter of fact, quite unpublishable.

Then both he and Rupert Holloway had discovered and almost simultaneously declared their passion for their landlady's daughter. She was beautiful; her father had (before that little difficulty with his creditors) held a commission in His Majesty's Army; and her mother could (so she said) trace her descent from John of Gaunt. And after due consideration she had told them—quite simply and childishly—that she would marry the man who could provide her with the larger income.

Rupert Holloway, being a bank clerk, had immediately proceeded to falsify the accounts which passed through his hands, and within six months had set aside a nest-egg of very nearly ten thousand pounds. It seemed that the landlady's daughter was as good as his. In the moment of his approaching triumph he had jeered at his rival and former friend, who was still, with pathetically misplaced confidence, pinning all his hopes on the success of "Love's Keepsake."

"Call that a novel, do you?" he had asked offensively. "Why, I could write a better story with one hand tied behind me."

"Then why don't you?" retorted Gerard Poole.

"Yes," added the landlady's daughter, who always enjoyed her admirers' quarrels. "Why don't you?"

"All right," said Rupert, goaded to a sudden determination, "I will."

And he had done so. There is no evidence, at least, that he actually performed this task under the handicap which he had mentioned, but he had certainly and indubitably performed it. In six weeks he had laid the manuscript of "The Story of Aurea" in the landlady's daughter's hands.

"I think it's lovely," she had said. "May I show it to Mr. Poole?"

Rupert had hesitated. A sudden look of nervousness had passed over his face. But in the end he had agreed.

Gerard Poole read the MS. Even to his jealous mind its merits were obvious. But, as he could hardly help noticing, its story dealt, to a most convincing degree of actuality, with the details of a great bank forgery. He was no fool, and he had gone downstairs to the landlady's daughter at once.

"Tell me," he had said, "has Mr. Holloway suggested that you and he should start life together in the colonies? In a land of open spaces and wide horizons?"

"Yes," said the landlady's daughter.

"Thank you," said Gerard Poole. And then he had gone straight off to the bank at which Rupert Holloway was employed and had asked to see the manager.

The rest of this early part of the history may be summarized quite shortly. Aided by his fellow-lodger, Rupert had skipped out of the country just in time. The ten thousand pounds, unfortunately, he was unable to take with him. But Gerard Poole had very kindly lent him enough for his third-class passage money and to see him started in Peru. Then he had published "The Story of Aurea" under his own name, and in another three months its immediate and

world-wide success had enabled him to marry the girl of his choice.

As has already been said, the marriage was not a happy one. Mrs. Poole had developed almost instantly a hectoring and bullying spirit which may possibly have been inherited from her late father. She was far too practical a woman ever seriously to threaten her husband with exposure, for she had no wish to return to the poverty of her former life. But this did not prevent her from seizing every private opportunity of making his existence a burden to him. When she had died, at the birth of their first child, Gerard Poole had been hard put to it to conceal his relief. His secret was now his own again, and he could enjoy his vast royalties in peace.

But, as you will already have foreseen, this peace was rudely interrupted almost at once. No author of a best-seller can ever hope to rest on his laurels. His agents and his publishers were bombarding him with inquiries as to the delivery of his next manuscript, and he had nothing to offer them except "Love's Keepsake." And "Love's Keepsake," as he was beginning to realize, might test his recently-acquired public a little too severely. Later on, perhaps, when he had them well in hand. But now—no, on the whole it was too risky.

Yet—something must be done.

And so he wrote to the *poste restante* at Callao and told Rupert Holloway that, if he would send him one manuscript a year, he would pay him a regular allowance of two hundred and fifty pounds; but that if he declined to do this, then it would be his regrettable duty to inform the Home Office of his present whereabouts.

There followed from two to three months of considerable anxiety on the part of the writer of this letter—months during which the agents and publishers were only staved off by his assumption of a temporary breakdown in health; and then Rupert Holloway had replied with a brief acceptance. Six weeks later the MS. of "Worm i' the Bud" arrived by registered post. It possessed every popular quality which had marked "The Story of Aurea," but—the scene was laid almost entirely in the Republic of Peru.

Gerard Poole hesitated for twenty-four hours. And then a particularly urgent telegram from his agents decided him. His wife was dead, his early friends he had already dropped. Who was to prove, then, that he had never so much as set foot in South America? Why, nobody. He dispatched the MS. to the agents, received by return of post an advance on account of royalties of a thousand pounds, and in due course found himself for the second time credited everywhere with the authorship of a best-seller.

And thus the story of his life had gone on. Every year the post brought him a new novel, and on each occasion its sales were more universal and staggering. He bought Broadmead from an impoverished country gentleman. His fame and his wealth grew swiftly and steadily. But for the existence of his daughter Aurea he would scarcely have had a care in the world.

But as Aurea continued to acquire years and intelligence, a new difficulty arose. Since it had never occurred to him to take her into his confidence, it became necessary to spend the whole of every morning shut into his study, lest inevitable suspicions should be aroused in her mind. Nor was this all. After three years in South America Rupert Holloway had moved on to Australia; then to Sarawak; then to Portuguese East Africa. And in spite of vigorous protests from his English representative he had insisted on utilizing the local colour in each place to the fullest possible extent. The unfortunate Gerard Poole found himself compelled—if his daughter's innocence were to be respected—to enter on a series of long and costly voyages.

You should not understand that he actually went so far as to visit the author of his works in his various retreats. He had a curious though intelligible reluctance to meeting Rupert Holloway face to face. But if his arrangements were to go on working smoothly, he must at least be known to have passed a week or so in the different countries which he described in his novels. And so, willy-nilly, he became a globe-trotter, though each year his destination was selected by forces which were entirely beyond his power to control. Yet, driven as he was by the insatiable appetite of his public and his own no less insatiable enjoyment of fame and success, he continued to set off time after time. And still, every morning when he was back at Broadmead, he would lock his study door and wait for the luncheon-gong to release him from the other part of his burden.

Then, after this existence had lasted for many years, he had unlocked his door one day and emerged to find a sun-tanned individual waiting for him in the hall. He had recognized him in a flash.

"Good heavens!" he had exclaimed. "Rupert! What are you doing here?"

"I have come to lunch," said Rupert Holloway. "And afterwards we are going to talk."

Gerard Poole bowed before the inevitable. Rupert Holloway had two helpings of every course, and finished up with three glasses

of port. Also he had laid himself out to charm and amuse the fifteen-year-old Aurea by every means in his power. And he had succeeded.

After lunch the two men retired to the study.

"Now, then," said Gerard Poole, brusquely, "what does this mean? What do you want?"

"In the first place," said Rupert, "one of your cigars."

Gerard Poole pushed the box across the writing-table.

"Help yourself," he said. "And what else?"

"I will admit," resumed Rupert, "that my original intention had been to expose you for the fraud and impostor that you are. You may thank your daughter, however, for the fact that I have changed my mind. I am now prepared to accept two thousand pounds a year and a small house on your estate. On these terms I am quite ready to go on supplying you with manuscripts. Have you any objection?"

Gerard Poole laughed coldly.

"You seem to forget," he replied, "that a word from me will still be enough to secure your appearance at the Old—I should say, at the New Bailey."

"That may be," said Rupert. "But if you think it over, I imagine you will see what a very short-sighted action that would be."

"You are threatening me?" said Gerard Poole.

"I am," answered Rupert.

Gerard Poole walked six times up and down the length of his study carpet with his hands clenched behind his back. Then he stopped.

"I suppose," he said, "that in the event of my consent, the setting of my future novels would be confined to the English country-side?"

"Certainly," said Rupert.

Gerard Poole frowned. Two thousand a year was nothing to him, and the relief from his perpetual voyages to the uttermost parts of the earth would, as he fully realized, be more than welcome. And yet to have his "ghost" living on the estate!

"I must think it over," he said at last.

"Perhaps it would assist the process," answered Rupert, "if I told you that in five minutes my terms will have exactly doubled."

We have already noted that Gerard Poole was no fool.

"Very well," he said, capitulating. "You may have your money. You may also have the dower-house as soon as I can get rid of my present tenants. But understand——"

"Oh, I quite understand!" interrupted Rupert. "I shall return to London this afternoon, as I left a friend of mine there. But I shall hope to be back in a few weeks at the outside—eh?—and then I shall start roughing out the scenario of the new novel at once."

Gerard Poole opened a drawer in his desk and took out his cheque-book.

"Oh, and by the way," added Rupert, "in view of all the circumstances of the case I have decided to change my name. Would you kindly make your draft payable to 'Rupert Brixton'?"

Gerard Poole did so. Half an hour later he saw Mr. Brixton into the car in plenty of time to catch the London express. And then he returned to his study and wrote a letter to the occupants of the dower-house giving them a month's notice of the termination of their tenancy.

What else, as he asked himself in vain, could he hope to do?

At the end of six weeks, during which Gerard Poole had experienced torments of indecision and anxiety, Rupert had suddenly returned, bringing with him a young man of about twenty-three, whom he had introduced to the inhabitants of Broadmead as his adopted son.

Anthony Park—for this was the young man's name—was a shy creature with a brooding air which ill-befitted his years. His manner towards his foster-father combined an odd mixture of gratitude and fear; of subservience tinged with resentment. It was as if one part of his nature were constantly reminding the other what he owed to his rather wild-looking protector.

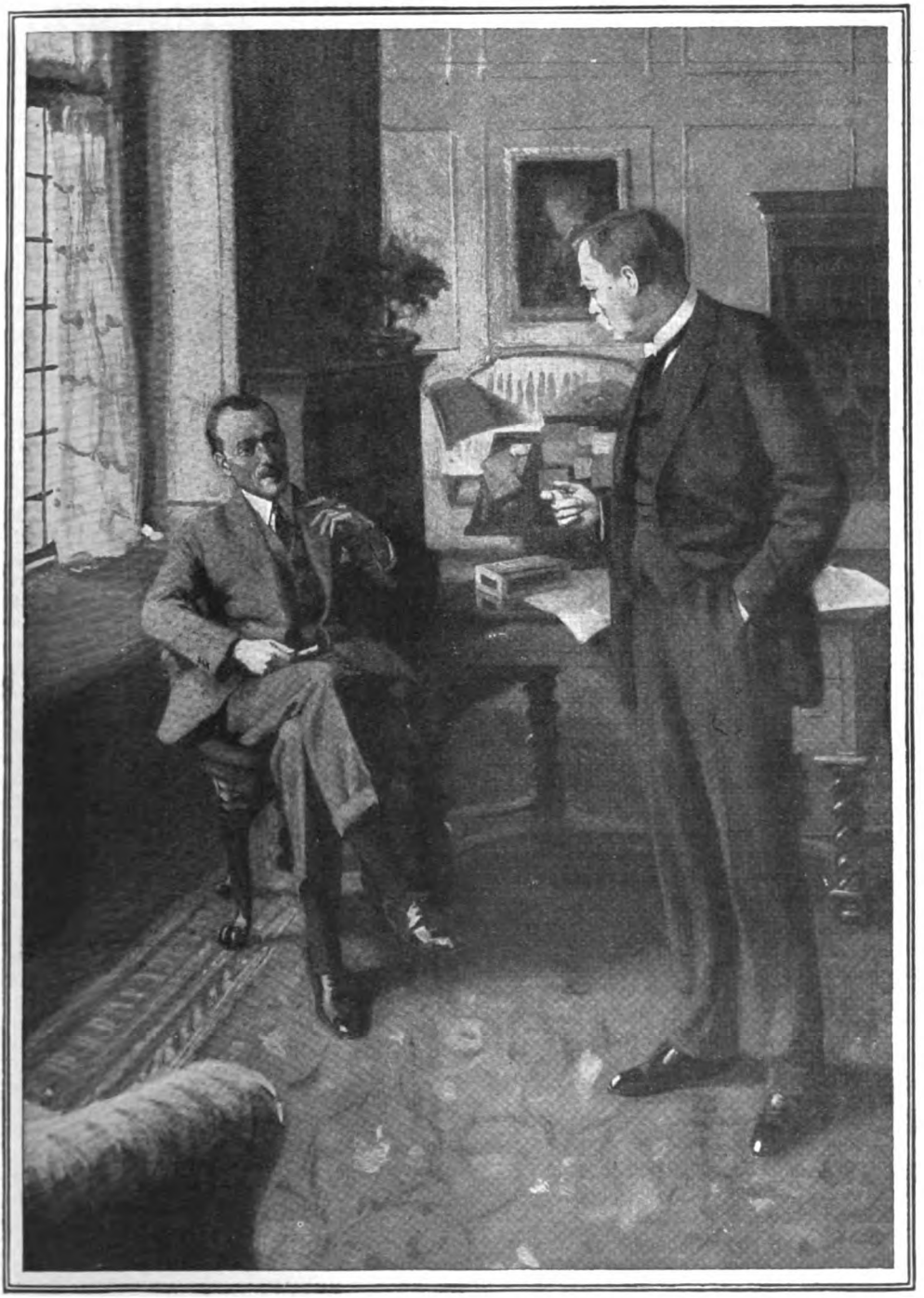
But Rupert had explained this to Gerard Poole and Aurea almost at once.

"Poor fellow," he said. "He had a bad time out in the Straits Settlements, where I first met him. The whole of his family were wiped out by fever in a week. He was getting over it himself when some fool left him alone with a bottle of disinfectant, and he drank the lot. Luckily I was able to pull him round, but it was a long time before he forgave me. I felt in a way," he mused, "that after dragging him back to life like that I owed him a good deal. And so—I adopted him."

Gerard Poole allowed a faint look of doubt to flicker in his eyes at this story. But Aurea swallowed it whole.

"I think it was splendid of you, Uncle Rupert," she said (for thus, to her father's annoyance, she had decided to address his old friend). "But don't you think he'd be happier now if he got some real work? Something to take his mind off his troubles?"

For some reason Rupert looked a little taken aback.



"You seem to forget that a word from me will still be enough to secure your appearance at the Old—I should say, at the New Bailey."

"I must say," Gerard Poole put in, "that I think Aurea is right. A young man like that ought to be given some steady job like—like——"

"Like yours," said Rupert, with a swift glance from the corner of his eyes.

The subject was dropped.

BUT on the whole this little incident must be regarded as exceptional in the quiet annals of Broadmead. For with the kind of hold that the two old friends had over each other, they both realized that little was to be gained by indulging in covert attacks on the other's vulnerable points. As the months and then the years went by, the whole impossible arrangement, which had once caused Gerard Poole seriously to consider announcing his complete retirement from the republic of letters, grew into a thing of use and custom.

Every morning still he withdrew to the privacy of his study and killed time as best he could until the sound of the gong, and every autumn a new and astoundingly successful novel would appear simultaneously in England and America under his celebrated name. And Rupert, also, had been as good as his word.

"Much as we admired that brilliant series of epic narratives," wrote the reviewer in the *Peristyle*, "in which Mr. Poole brought, with his wondrous art, the broad spaces of lands overseas into the lives and homes of British readers, we must yet welcome his return in the setting of his new book to the more familiar scenes of England herself. Mr. Poole is too precious a national possession for us to rest quite content with any development of his genius which should neglect for too long 'the buttercups . . . far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.' May we express the hope that in his future work . . ." And so on.

In fact, in spite of the flimsy foundation of blackmail and chicane on which the whole of this vast literary reputation had been erected; in spite of the strange series of events which had placed Gerard Poole and Rupert Brixton as neighbours on the same estate, it almost seemed that their mutual strangle-hold would continue to provide the world with the masterpieces for which it cried out until one or the other of them should shuffle off this mortal coil for good.

But this would have been counting without Aurea.

SHE was nineteen now, and as witnesses to her beauty we have already called those interviewers who came down to Broadmead to lunch with her father. But since the only evidence as to her character so far has been that reference to Gerard Poole's opinion of her as a nuisance about the house, we must add that she was in reality no less charming than she was beautiful. It was, in fact, only the necessity of keeping up his deceit in the constant presence of those limpid and guileless eyes that caused her to qualify in her father's mind as a nuisance.

How gladly, as the summer sun came pouring through his study windows, would he have left his forcible confinement and gone strolling through the woods and gardens, not a care in his mind, but for the fear of meeting Aurea! And how reluctantly was he driven to almost the only mental exertion which ever came his way (though none the more welcome for that) by his efforts to answer her dutiful questions as to the progress of his next novel!

Yet when one day the chance presented itself of losing her in a manner which might be expected to add to the happiness of both, did he jump at it? Or if he didn't jump at it, then why not? Was it merely the natural impulse felt by all parents to refuse the bestowal of their daughters' hands first and to think about it afterwards? Partly, no doubt. But there were other objections in Gerard Poole's mind to an engagement between Aurea and Anthony Park. Not only was the link between Broadmead and its dower-house quite strong enough without anything of this sort, but there was something secretive and mysterious about this same Anthony which Gerard Poole—even if he found it hard to put into words—had no doubt that he disliked.

"But what does he do?" he asked, with a sound of annoyance in his voice. "How does he propose to support you?"

A tearful look came into Aurea's huge eyes.

"I—I don't know, father," she said. "I know he works very hard at something, but he says I wouldn't understand what it is."

"Bah!" said Gerard Poole.

"But Uncle Rupert has promised him five hundred a year when he marries, and I thought—I thought perhaps you would let me have an allowance too."

Knowing where that five hundred would come from, Gerard Poole nearly choked.

"Of course I'll give you a proper allowance if I approve of your marriage," he managed to answer; "but—but——"

"But what, father?"

"Well, in this case I *don't* approve. Why, good heavens, Aurea, what do we know about young Park after all? What *is* this mysterious work that he says he does? Find that out, and then I might consider the matter. But I can't have any secrets;

I can't have anything underhand. I'm not used to it, and I don't like it."

And with this unsatisfactory decision Aurea had to be content. Her trust in her Anthony remained unshaken, but she knew only too well the look that would come into his face if she pressed him again to explain what it was that he did all morning in his little room at the dower-house.

Nevertheless, that evening they met once more where the two gardens joined, and she described her interview with her father to him in full.

"And, darling," she concluded, "don't think that I should ever bother you about this myself. I quite believe you when you say that I wouldn't understand what you do. I know that it couldn't possibly be anything bad or dishonourable. But father——"

Anthony Park interrupted her with a groan.

"If only I could explain!" he said. "If only I *could* tell you! But it's a secret, Aurea. And it isn't only my secret. It's—it's Mr. Brixton's as well."

"But surely Uncle Rupert wouldn't let that stand in our way? If I went to him; if I told him——"

"You can try if you like," said Anthony, with a heavy sigh. "But you'll see what'll happen."

"I shall ask him now," said Aurea, gallantly. And leaving Anthony staring moodily at the setting sun, she climbed the railings and went straight up to the dower-house.

"Uncle Rupert," she said, "Anthony and I want to get married."

"What?" said Mr. Brixton, with a start. And then a worried look came over his face. "Oh, Lor'!" he added.

"But father says he won't allow it unless he knows what Anthony does, and Anthony says he can't tell me because you wouldn't approve. Oh, please can't I know? I swear I wouldn't tell a soul except father and——"

"Oh, Lor'!" said Mr. Brixton again. His romantic soul was torn once more by the resemblance of this girl to his early love. Yet how would it help her if he told her the truth?

"You must wait," he added, presently. "I—I'll speak to your father."

Aurea's face lit up.

"You will!" she cried. "Oh, Uncle Rupert, you're an angel! I know it will be all right now. I *know* it will."

Rupert Brixton shuddered.

"There, there," he said, kindly. "Run along now, my dear. Tell your father I'll come and see him after dinner."

GERARD POOLE pushed the decanter towards his old friend, and indicated the position of the cigars.

"Well?" he asked, stifling a yawn. "How's the new book going?"

Rupert Brixton disregarded the proffered refreshment.

"I haven't come to see you about that," he said. "I have come about Aurea."

"Well?" asked Gerard Poole again.

"Anthony is a very excellent fellow," said Rupert. "A little lacking in initiative and self-confidence, perhaps; but as good-hearted a boy as I have ever met. Aurea tells me that you are objecting to her engagement because you want to know more about him."

"And you have come, I imagine," said Gerard Poole, "to tell me what he declines to tell me himself?"

"No," said Rupert. "I have come to advise you to leave that question unanswered."

"And why, if I may ask?" said Gerard Poole, raising his eyebrows slightly.

"I should prefer not to tell you," answered Rupert.

"But this is ridiculous," said Gerard Poole. "You bring this young man home from Heaven knows where; you tell me that all his relations are dead and that you have adopted him; but if you think that is enough recommendation for Aurea's husband, then you are very seriously mistaken. I demand to know who and what he is, and what he is doing."

"You do?" asked Rupert, sharply.

"Certainly. It is my right, and I demand it."

Rupert reached for a cigar at last.

"Very well, then," he said. "I will tell you. He writes your books."

Gerard Poole stared across the little table.

"Would you mind saying that again?" he asked, presently. "I'm not sure that I quite——"

"I said," repeated Rupert, "that he writes your books. He has written them, to be exact, for seven years and eight months—ever since I came to his assistance after the loss of his family in the Straits Settlements. He has made, I think you will admit, a distinct success of the job."

"But," stammered Gerard Poole, "this is monstrous. How—why——?"

"I was tired of writing them myself," proceeded Rupert, smoothly, "and I had placed Anthony Park under a very deep obligation to me. There was nothing to prevent my subletting my contract if I chose, and I did choose. The only difference it makes to you is that you no longer have

any shadow of hold over the real author of your works. On the contrary——"

"But I've still got a hold over you," snarled Gerard Poole. "And don't you forget it. There's no statute of limitations for cooking bank accounts."

"Unfortunately," Rupert agreed, "that is the case. Nevertheless, there is a tendency on the part of the law to look with a lenient eye on an offender who surrenders himself to justice—especially when the whole affair took place so long ago. I doubt if I should get more than eighteen months."

"You mean——"

"I mean that if you drive me to it, I shall give myself up before you have the chance to split on me. But if I do——"

He left the threat unfinished, but it was none the less clear for that.

Gerard Poole picked up the whisky decanter with a nervous movement and set it down again.

"What do you want?" he asked, grimly.

"I want," said Rupert Brixton, "your sanction to Aurea's engagement and marriage. In return for this, I—and I am certain that I can count on Anthony as well—will hold my tongue."

"But, you silly ass," cried Gerard Poole, "do you suppose that Aurea—that any girl would let her husband alone until she had got to the bottom of his secret? Our one chance is to knock the thing on the head now—at once. Besides," he added, more weakly, "if Aurea found out that I—that I wasn't what she thought I was, it would break her heart."

"I doubt it," said Rupert. He knocked the ash from his cigar. "Does Aurea ever speak to you about your books?" he asked.

"Well—sometimes," said Gerard Poole, with a faint look of surprise. "Not very often, I agree, but——"

"But she has spoken to me," said Rupert. "And, as a matter of fact, she thinks them rotten."

The habit of years was too much for Gerard Poole. His face darkened.

"How dare she!" he thundered. "Why, only last week the *Green Monthly* said——" He broke off suddenly, remembering. "But it's *Anthony's* books she thinks so rotten, then," he said. "How'd she like it if she knew—— Oh, Lord, Rupert—I say, what on earth am I to do?"

"Perhaps you'd like to try your agents with 'Love's Keepsake'?" suggested Mr. Brixton, mockingly.

Gerard Poole groaned.

"I have," he said. And then, paling at the memory of it: "I had to pretend afterwards that I'd sent it them as a joke. And you don't know how nearly they never saw it."

"Uncle Rupert," she said,

"Well, well," said Rupert, soothingly. "Every good thing comes to an end sooner or later; and no one can say you haven't had a run for your money."

"Eh?" said Gerard Poole, starting. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied Rupert, "that the time has come for your definitive *édition de luxe*. What shall we call it? The 'Broadmead' Edition, eh?"

"I don't follow you," stammered Gerard Poole.

"You are going to retire," said Rupert. And then, as his old friend still stared at him stupidly, he added: "You are going to stop writing."

"What?" cried Gerard Poole. "Give up my place in the front rank of living authors? Give up my interviews; my contributions to magazine symposia; my press-cuttings? Never. What should I have left to live for?"

"The happiness of your daughter," said Rupert Brixton.

"Pah!" said Gerard Poole.

"And the certainty of being known in a very short time as the Last of the Great Edwardians."

"'The Last of the Great Edwardians,'" repeated Gerard Poole, rolling the phrase appreciatively over his tongue. "There's something in that."

"As an alternative to jail for myself, exposure for you, and unhappiness for Aurea and Anthony," said Rupert Brixton, "there is everything to support it." He paused for a moment, and then added: "May I take it that you agree?"

Gerard Poole looked round the walls of his study; that prison from which he was now offered honourable release at last. He saw himself growing old, but still respected; decorative grandchildren clustering round his knee; the "Broadmead Edition of the Works of Gerard Poole" rising year after year in value. He saw young writers making pilgrimages to him in this room; presenting him with his portrait on his ninetieth birthday; acting as his pall-bearers when he was laid to rest in Poets' Corner or in the crypt of St. Paul's.

"Well, well," he said, with dignity. "Perhaps you are right, Rupert. I will send for Aurea at once."

"Anthony and I want to get married."

THERE is but little to add. Gerard Poole still lives in his beautiful home. He does absolutely nothing all day, except potter about his garden and the surrounding estate. But he is cultivating a manner and appearance which will in due course inevitably earn for him the title to which he aspires. Almost any moment now we may expect to read of him as the Last of the Great Edwardians. Sometimes—as he had hoped—he receives visits from the young writers of to-day.

"What is my secret?" he asks them. "It is simply this. That the longer I live, the more I realize that in the end everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds."

And Rupert Brixton still lives at the dower-house. He is getting feeble now, but he still goes across every evening to play chess with his oldest friend.

"Yes," he tells these same young gentlemen, "how little did I think when I first went into lodgings with Gerard Poole forty years ago that at the end of my journey we should still be together! There is a lesson for some of you here, if you care to see it. Gerard Poole and I have never hidden a single thought from each other all our lives. We have known, as few others can hope to know it, that friendship implies utter and unquestioning trust."

And Aurea and Anthony live happily together, surrounded by children, in their London home. Anthony gave up writing from the day that his engagement was sanctioned, and his profession now is a matter which he would conceal from no man. He is a publisher—a partner in the firm with which his father-in-law was for so long and profitably associated.

But the great secret is safe with him also. Aurea has never again asked him what he did during all those years at the dower-house. She is as good a wife as she was a daughter.

Besides, she was listening through the study key-hole the night that the Broadmead Edition was first planned, and if she asked her husband again there is always the danger that he might tell her.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 127.

(The Third of the Series.)

ONE foot is all we here present,
Or, rather, its equivalent.

1. One of a dozen here we choose,
   A word in use among the Jews.
2. To show his other name to you,
   An English battlefield will do.
3. Succeed, and rightly. Take instead
   Its other name; curtail, behead.
4. A vessel. Should one letter go,
   A meal, and nothing more, would show.
5. Artichoke, turnip, spinach, bean—
   Four instances of this are seen.
6. The way out. Add a letter, here
   A coloured lady would appear.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 127 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on February 12th.

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 126.

(The Second of the Series.)

SKIS and toboggans, ice and snow,
To Switzerland our athletes go.

1. 'Tis true, no king of Switzerland was this,
   And yet the sight he saw was rather Swiss.
2. Devil or boy—who knows which it may be?
   A veritable fiend of mischief he.
3. He lacks whereon to sleep who rose to fame
   By safe deliverance from fiery flame.
4. "Rub lightly" was unheard of in those days;
   "Strike hard and often," and perchance 'twould blaze.
5. 'Tis once upon a time; in poets' rhyme
   The word was common once upon a time.
6. Anent the lady—here behold your cue:
   But be not this, for that will never do.

KING COLE.

1.	W	encesla	S
2.	I	m	P
3.	N	eg	O
4.	T	inde	R
5.	E	rs	T
6.	R	emis	S

NOTES.—Light 3. Abednego. 6. *Re* miss.

TWENTY-FOURTH SERIES: RESULT.

As many as twenty-one solvers answered the entire series of acrostics correctly; one of them, Ubique, is ineligible as a recent winner, and the other twenty will divide the prizes, each receiving twelve shillings and sixpence.

The successful competitors are: Anvil, Mr. C. Dance, 45, Cowick Road, Tooting, S.W.; Beggar, Mr. B. G. Pearce, 5, Ethelbert Road, Bromley, Kent; Cyno, Mr. C. Norman, 28, Duke's Avenue, New Malden, Surrey; Forest, Mr. P. E. Herrick, 40, Arodene Road, S.W.2; Junius, Mr. F. C. W. Grigson, Amesbury, Hindhead; Lobo, Mrs. L. Morris, 74, Larch Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2; Manou, Mr. L. A. Jones, Asterley, Goldsmid Road, Tonbridge; Roc, Mr. R. C. Oakley, Dunchurch Hall, Rugby; Rumbal, Sir A. Croft, K.C.I.E., Rumleigh, Bere Alston, Devon; Sey, Miss N. Seymour, Bereweeke House, Winchester; Silex, Mr. J. L. Wolferstan, 5, Princess Square, Plymouth; Sivart, Mr. C. Clay, 11, Tite Street, Chelsea; Slugo, Mr. J. J. Holloway, Tyndale, Howard Road, New Malden, Surrey; Somerford, Mrs. Roper Tyler, Barton House, Tetbury, Glos; Splash, Mr. L. Dale, Christ's Hospital, West Horsham; Vinjo, Mrs. C. B. Keston, 33a, Hogarth Road, S.W.5; Wals, Mr. W. Stradling, 3, Charlbury Road, Oxford; Yoke, Mr. F. Rawson, Oriental Club, Hanover Square, W.1; Zenas, Mr. F. S. Pilleau, 8, Meadow Way Green, Letchworth, Herts; Zyme, Mr. J. W. Pulsford, 107a, Brixton Hill, S.W.

From a photograph.

THE CROSS ON THE MATTERHORN

by

C. GOS

ILLUSTRATED BY A. GILBERT ROI.

This most thrilling and dramatic story is one of a collection of mountaineering tales by the well-known writer Charles Gos, which has been selling by thousands on the Continent. A film version of the story, made on the Matterhorn itself—where the cross actually stands, as shown in the above photograph—has already met with much success in France and Switzerland, and is, we understand, shortly to be shown in this country.

THE smuggler had crossed the glacier of Za-de-Zan. He was slowly walking down the moraine, advancing warily and creeping stealthily behind the boulders. It was obvious that he did not wish to be seen. His strange demeanour was significant enough, and so was the huge canvas bag he carried upon his back.

"Jean Joseph," mumbled the man, addressing himself, "this is a risky thing to do! To venture at noon in such a place! What a wretched job, a smuggler's! But one must live, and life would be jolly enough were it not for those cursed dogs—the frontier guards. Put out your pipe, old man—one never knows. They have such a keen scent, the scoundrels!"

Jean Joseph struck his pipe on his alpen-

stock, blew out the remaining ashes, and put it in his pocket.

The morning was already well advanced. The sun was shining at its zenith. Water streamed down from the glaciers. Tiny, smoothly-rounded, green tarns sparkled. The Alp was peaceful, save for its usual sounds. And Jean Joseph, bent under his burden, his ears attuned to catch the slightest noise, studied his route, seemed to smell the air and scent his way, and then went on again, keeping close to the rocks.

Suddenly the shrill whistle of a bullet pierced the silence. Yonder, towards the moraine, a puff of white smoke rose in the air and quickly vanished. A sharp report rang out, which echoed below the glacier of the Grandes Murailles, startled some snow-partridges—and the smuggler fell heavily headlong with a bullet through his head.

A death-like silence followed the thunder of the report. Nothing was heard save the death-rattle in old Jean Joseph's throat. He was dying alone amidst the pebbles under the blue sky and the glorious sun. He was dying, knowing neither why nor how, and ignorant of the identity of his murderer. It was difficult to realize the sudden tragedy. But yonder, by the moraine, a uniformed mountain frontier guard, or douanier, was slowly lowering his rifle, the barrel of which was still smoking.

THE tragic end of Jean Joseph the smuggler was almost forgotten. A year had passed and no one had stirred to avenge his death, which was looked upon as a murder by the mountaineers, by whom the douanier is detested, despised, hated. The douanier who had killed Jean Joseph—a tall, well-made man, nicknamed the Roman in the valley—managed to prove that he had been set upon and that he fired in self-defence. The Roman remained at his post, and once again the law of the strong prevailed against the weak. No serious encounters occurred during that year between frontier guards and smugglers. The Roman, however, availing himself of the rumours circulating around his name on account of this unfortunate event, and feeling himself supported by his superior officers, assumed an attitude of growing hostility towards the mountaineers. He ogled the girls boldly and shamelessly, harassed anyone whom he suspected of giving shelter to the smugglers, and threatened to bring about the arrest of herdsmen as accomplices. He would eye a man from head to foot, as though saying: "Coward! Neither you nor anyone else has the courage to avenge the dead!"

Among poor Jean Joseph's comrades, two notorious smugglers, Antoine and Daniel—the very men who were deemed likely to start a vendetta—gradually took a less active part in these unlawful expeditions, and finally gave them up altogether. The Roman congratulated himself upon his good fortune. This reduced by two the number of his opponents, and it behoved him to gain their confidence at any cost. His design succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. At first the converted smugglers gave him but a surly reception, but later they became more amenable, and finally quite friendly. Friendship swiftly inspires confidence. In the hope of converting them into spies, the Roman extolled the charms of his profession, and one evening, after drinking, he told them how Jean Joseph had lost his life.

TOWARDS the end of September the weather happened to be so fine that Antoine and Daniel expressed a strong desire to make one more ascent of the Matterhorn before the winter set in. They asked the Roman to join them; the latter accepted willingly, and without a moment's delay the trio started for the Becca—as the Matterhorn is still called in those parts.

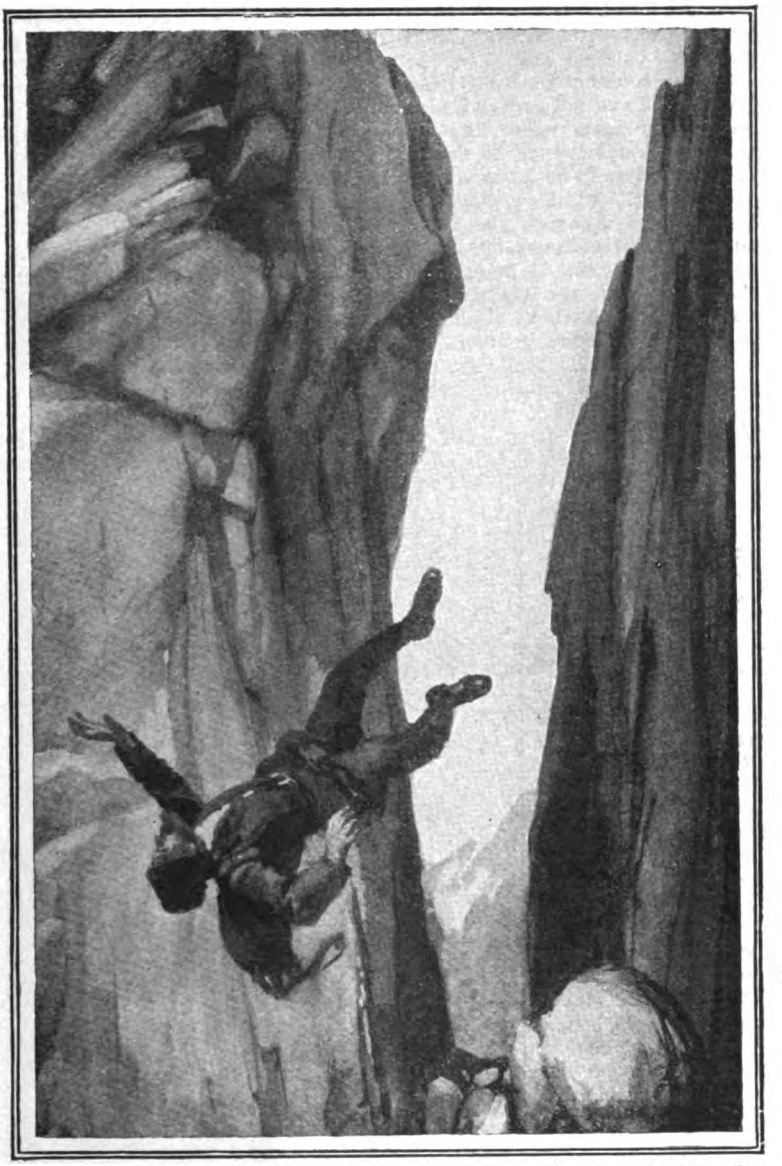
One after the other the famous obstacles of the well-known crest were overcome. Precipices deepened, the noble lines of the peak assumed a more delicate beauty and revealed their wonderful architecture. Up above, far above, draped in the blue sky, and resplendent, soared the summit—the summit whose fabulous spurs and buttresses resemble from afar the closed portico of a great temple flanked with gargoyles. Down the steep snow-gullies icicles detached by the sun skimmed by with crystal sounds. A huge mass of rock collapsed with a crash, smiting other rocks which it carried down, and released along the bare cliffs a storm of clattering and smoking stones. Then silence reigned anew—the great eternal never-changing silence.

AT the foot of the cross erected on the summit of the Matterhorn the four men were resting—the douanier, known as the Roman; the two smugglers, Daniel and Antoine; and Ange—an old comrade whom they had met by chance at Giomein and persuaded to join the small party. They were eating and talking. A comfortable lassitude came over them after the violent effort of the climb. They were chatting gaily and with as much freedom as if they were sitting on a bench outside their own chalet. Indeed, they attached but little importance to such an ascent. The wonderful landscape which they contemplated left them undisturbed. The unfastened rope lay on a slab; the ice-axes, blunted by repeated blows, stood sideways

in the snow; the provisions bulged out from the open knapsacks.

The air was soft, there was no wind, not a single cloud in the sky, and the white Alps, with their numerous interlaced chains and numberless summits, glittered in the sunshine. Dark were the slate-blue forests, dull the grey valleys, discoloured and wan the fields, the pastures, and the gorges.

Facing Zermatt, the terrible abyss rushes down abruptly: a formidable cliff studded with snow-fringes, glazed with sparkling, glassy slabs, and streaked with blackened walls. The slope runs down and disappears—there is the void and then the glacier with its immaculate whiteness, where Whymper's unfortunate companions were dashed to death. Lower down, in a straight line, the bronzed chalets of Z'mutt can be seen, and, farther down still, Zermatt astride on the Visp with its scattered blocks of wooden houses. No other peak in the whole wide Alpine range—in the whole world, perhaps—affords such a shuddering sensation of void as does the Matterhorn. In its splendid isolation the huge pyramid juts out like some gigantic rock encircled by the sea. Encompassed by the void, and surrounded on all sides by a yawning chasm, it seems to touch the sky.



A sharp report rang out and the smuggler fell with a bullet through his head.

"COME on, Roman! Another drop! It is well to regain one's strength for the descent."

And the Roman held out his goblet and tossed off greedily the generous wine. The excitement of the climb and the physical strain had weakened his body and dried his throat. After he had drunk the wine, he became slightly intoxicated.

"So that is the famous Cervino!" exclaimed the Roman. "I shall lead the douaniers of Prarayé here next year—yes, the whole lot of them." And he laughed, striking up at the same time the popular refrain of "Santa Lucia."

"You are right, Roman! Our old Cervino

is not what it used to be in the days of Carrel, the bersagliere. Hold out your glass ! "

Had the douanier been less intoxicated, he would have noticed the winks and nods which the men were exchanging among themselves every time he drank. They, on the other hand, took very little.

" Friends," went on the Roman, raising his goblet, " I drink the health of every smuggler in the kingdom ! "

" Well spoken, Roman," said Antoine. " And I drink the health of the frontier guards, each of whom ought to be as jolly a rogue as you are yourself."

The men touched glasses. Daniel stood against the cross, lighting his pipe.

" Hullo," said he, puffing, " the Col de Valpelline, over there—no, not there—yonder, against the Horn—see where it glitters like a pane of glass ! I don't like to see that place—it reminds me too much of poor Jean Joseph. That was his last journey before the sad event."

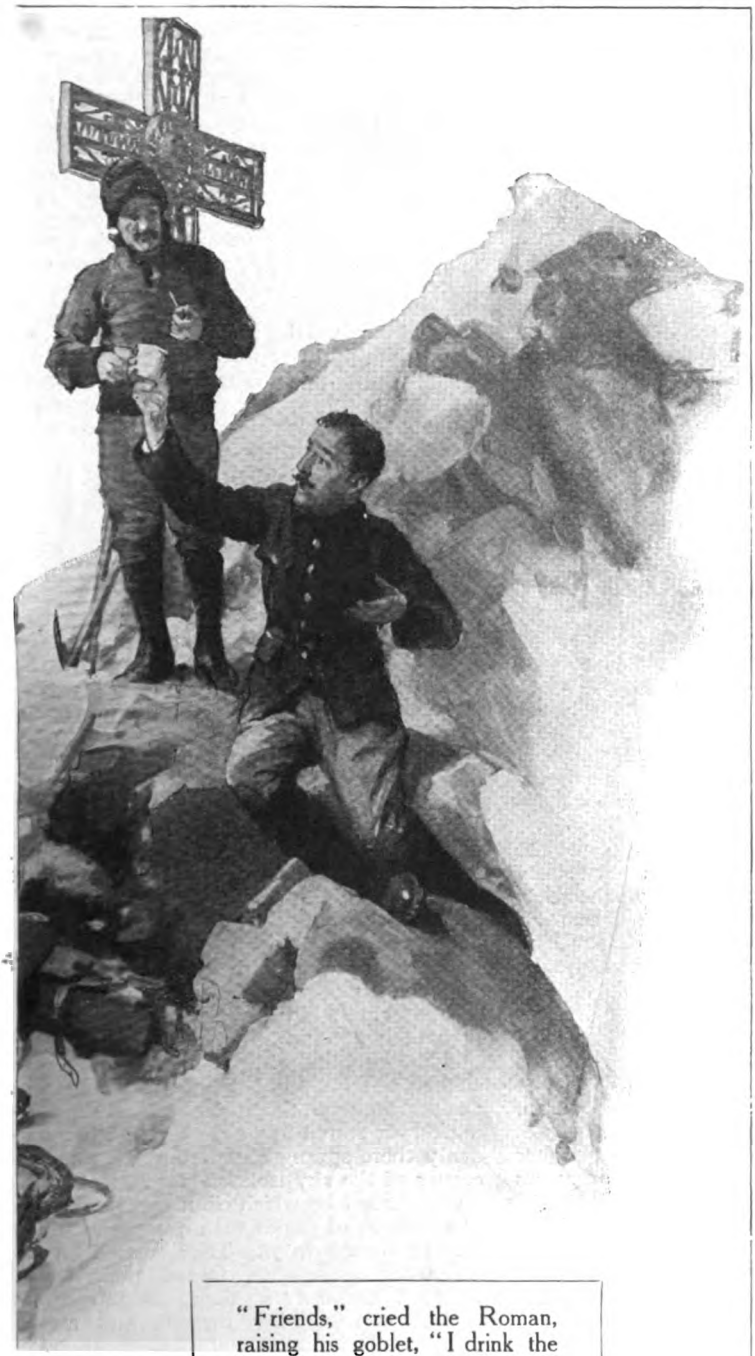
A peal of laughter interrupted him. It came from the Roman, who, with a thick voice, blurted out :—

" Ah ! Ah ! Before the event. Let me tell you the story ! Ah ! Jean Joseph, poor old fellow, it was his last trip before the long journey that leads to Paradise. I had gone up alone on that day, to go the usual rounds, and I had promised myself to bring back a marmot for the soup. At noon, not having fired a single shot, I stopped, cursing my ill-luck, and sat down to have a snack—it was just before the moraine, near the flat where there is a lake in the Spring. I kept a sharp look-out whilst I was eating—the place is known for its game—swearing that I would shoot the first thing that moved.

' I had been there a quarter of an hour without anything happening, when suddenly I thought I saw something move over the other side under the snow slopes of the Tour de Creton. I snatched up my glasses, looked all around me. A man, a smuggler, was creeping behind the rocks, his load upon his back. 'Ah, brigand,' said I to myself, ' this time you don't escape.' It was Jean Joseph."

At that moment Ange, the fourth member of the party, started and turned pale.

" I seized my rifle, levelled it, aimed slowly " (the Roman mimicked the scene as he spoke, his left eye closed, his arms in the shooting position), " and—bang ! I fired. Without a sound, he fell stone-dead upon his load with his legs in the air. Four



"Friends," cried the Roman, raising his goblet, "I drink the **health of every smuggler in the kingdom!**"

hundred yards away, friends, right in the head—what a shot, eh? It is worth——"

He did not finish his sentence. An iron grip nearly crushed his arm, lifted him and placed him upon his feet. Ange was before him, staring him in the face, speechless, a terrible look in his eyes. Astonished and sobered, the douanier neither resisted nor understood. But, as the seconds passed, and as the grip was getting tighter and Ange's face becoming hideous, he uttered an exclamation of pain, and growled :—

"Comrade, what the devil——? You are drunk! Let me go! Let me go! Daniel! Antoine!"

Antoine and Daniel did not move. They looked on in silence. And Daniel, leaning against the cross, took his pipe out of his mouth, and said, in a quiet voice :—

"Ange is the son of Jean Joseph!"

TOWARDS the end of September the days are short. Having left the hut rather late, the climbers had reached the crest as the afternoon was drawing to a close, and one felt that the evening would soon set in, without any twilight, without any lingering glimmer.

Bound and gagged, the Roman lay on his back at

the foot of the cross. His head rested on the edge of the precipice on the Italian side, and the rush of cold air which came from the great gulf below made his hair quiver. He could only see the sky, the blue sky, pure and cloudless, and his eyes, dilated by the terror of this silent waiting, at the end of which lay his death-warrant, rolled in their sockets. He did not stir, well knowing that the slightest movement would overbalance him. He now understood the plot against him, the treason of the two smugglers, the chance meeting with Ange, sprung from nowhere! This stranger—Jean Joseph's son! Jean Joseph's son! Daniel's last words, sharp, cutting, tragic in their simplicity, had burnt into his soul. "Ange is the son of Jean Joseph!" The hour of the vendetta had struck—implacable and merciless. And he wished he could roll over the precipice ere they hurled him into space.

Some distance away from him the three smugglers consulted one another. Their mysterious deliberation, their tranquillity, their powerful build, and their manly features impressed him more than any threats. They were—supreme token of an invincible power—as destiny itself, as fate holding sway over one life against which rebellion is useless and all entreaties are vain. A man was about to die. And this council of death held near the prisoner—under a solemn invocation of the divine blessing—the cross on the Matterhorn—was awful.

Daniel stepped forward alone on the snowy ridge. Having reached the extremity he stopped, looked carefully down the steep gradient, searched the red rocks, scanned—his hand shading his eyes—the slope on which clambered the caravans from Zermatt, and finally returned.

"No one in sight," said he; "let us proceed."

"Let us proceed," repeated Antoine, nodding his head.

The three men approached the Roman, whom they surrounded.

With unutterable fear the prisoner stared wildly at each of the smugglers in turn.

With a deadly pallor upon his face, Ange spoke the first words:—

"You are about to die, douanier!" The Roman never flinched, it was as though he were paralysed. "You shall die, you rogue! Like a coward you murdered my father. Now your turn has come! One year has gone by, but his comrades have been watchful—and I, Ange, the son of Jean Joseph, I will avenge my father! I tell you that you are about to die."

A sudden shudder shook the Roman's body. He arched himself upon his head and nearly slipped down the precipice. Antoine held him motionless, a knee upon his chest.

"You shall die, scoundrel," continued Jean Joseph's son, with remorseless determination. "You shall die, but not as you anticipate! It seems that you are anxious to make the acquaintance of the rocks below, eh? You are saying to yourself: 'Better fall into it ere they throw me over!' No, brigand, no, you are mistaken, we shall not pitch you over. That is too sweet an end for your miserable carcass. You shall die slowly, slowly—the punishment is our own invention—and you will have time to ponder over your crime. You shall die on the cross, like our Saviour, and if you know how to pray, beseech Him to grant you forgiveness!"

The Roman shuddered, roused by a supreme instinct of revolt. His gag scarcely hindered the desperate efforts of his mouth, but his passionate appeals for mercy and forgiveness, his beseeching words, the supreme words which burst forth from his innermost self, were smothered and remained unsaid. A continual groaning came from his throat. Then his eyes flared, became round and dilated, and rolled back in their bloodshot sockets. The Roman fainted.

In an instant the three smugglers had lifted him and pressed him against the cross. They bound him, still gagged, three feet above the ground, his arms tied to the iron bars. Then, having girded on their rope and strapped on their knapsacks, they descended one behind the other, and silently disappeared.

THE day was drawing in. With the coming of evening the sky had become overcast. The prelude of a storm swept across the glaciers. The vast arena of Tiefenmatten, with its white ledges of snow, was shaded, as if impalpable ashes were floating in the atmosphere. Some strange and disquieting torpor rested upon the earth, when suddenly there sprang forth from the remotest corner of the sky isolated patches of small, queer-shaped brownish clouds. They looked like a flight of eagles with outspread wings, soaring in the wind. They settled on the neighbouring heights, folded their wings, rounded themselves, then became drawn out into long, silky threads and moved no more. The Dent Blanche was thus hooded, and then the Dent d'Herens and the Obergabelhorn. The Matterhorn alone, unclouded, erected its lofty black peak. But soon other small clouds with eagle wings appeared, soared towards the huge mass, and submerged its summit. A sudden rush

With unutterable fear the prisoner stared wildly at each of the smugglers in turn.

of wind broke upon the mountains and another blast sprang from the valleys and swirled into the gullies. The day was coming to its dreadful close.

The smugglers hastened their descent, night and the blizzard following close on their heels. They had already crossed the Great Stride, the flat crest of the Tyndall peak, and were just about to attack the dizzy ridge which plunges on to the Col du Lion when, all of a sudden, they stopped and raised their heads. A strange sound floated past them which seemed to fall from the heavens. Long, heartrending, desperate sounds, sometimes like to the moans of the wind, sometimes with bewailing tones and at others with a soft and almost tender melody.

The smugglers understood, for this came from the summit, and they listened, struck with awe. Daniel was about to speak when—after a short pause—the clamour started again.

The howling was becoming so frightful that some terrible murder seemed to be taking place. Indeed, it was more ghastly than a murder. Death must have been confronting the living man. The three men stared at each other as the yells of the victim rang in their ears. The screams came at regular intervals, broken by brief pauses, then started afresh, hoarse, louder, more desperate, and gradually died away, muffled and mournful. The sombre cliffs of the Matterhorn echoed these horrible screams, wherein quivered beseeching cries for help. Then, shriller still, came harsh notes like the hysterical laugh of a madman out of breath, followed by death-rattles —then again silence, as of a life in suspense on the brink of nothingness.

Grave and thoughtful the smugglers listened, unmoved by the cries of the crucified man. They thought in their hearts that their action was humane, that justice had been rightfully enacted and Jean Joseph avenged.

"The scoundrel!" said Ange. "He has got rid of the gag. Yell away, you cursed douanier, no one will be there to set you free to-night"—he looked at the threatening sky—"nor to-morrow. Yell! Yell to your heart's content!"

THE wails which rose anew stopped abruptly in the Roman's throat. A spectacle as grand as it was terrifying struck him dumb and held the smugglers spellbound with superstitious awe. A ray of sun darted from the sky, rent the whirling mists; it tore them open, clearing the crest, and projected the cross, immense and unearthly, upon the screen of clouds. The outlines of the crucified man appeared sharp and defined against the pale sky; the man and the instrument of torture looked fantastic, like the work of some occult and infernal power.

The spectral vision, at first motionless, became animated for a moment; it was only the Roman struggling upon the cross! Then the light diminished in intensity, and, as it gradually waned, the spectre dimmed, faded away, seemed to melt among the lurid mists and suddenly vanished. The clouds thickened, curled at their tops, and united in a horizontal base which cut off the head of the peak.

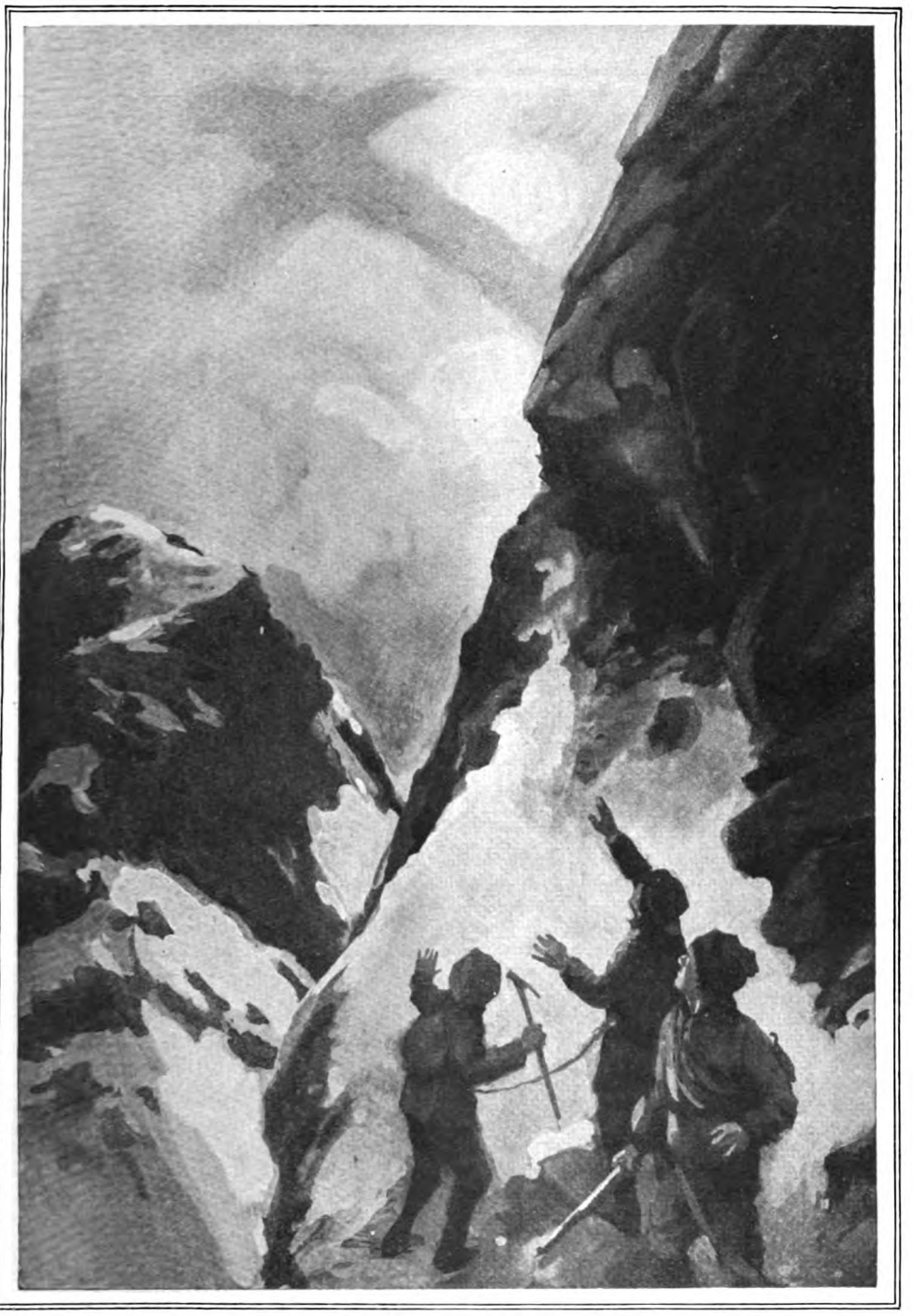
The disappearance of the vision was followed by a deep silence, and as the cries were no longer heard there were terror and mystery in this heavy silence. Suddenly a whirling and hissing blast beat down upon the mound, shaking it. Caught in the wake of the raging storm, a thick cloud over the Z'mutt glacier swooped down upon the crest as a bird upon its prey. And the mists, giving way as it seemed under the crushing weight, sank as far as the mighty rocks of the "Shoulder." Lightning shot out, rending the clouds. Then came the thunder. Deafening, the prolonged rollings battered the cliffs, smote the shattered ridges, and the echoes boomed, blown far away by the wind. The thunder had scarcely ceased when a shower of hail crackled upon the stones.

Almost instantaneously the mountain became white and enveloped in mist. In the first hours of eventide snowflakes became scattered among the hail and, slowly and peacefully, it began to snow. During the night a raging storm spent its fury around the summit of the Matterhorn. The lightning wrought about its head a crown of fire and the thunder filled the restless gloom with its ceaseless cataclysmic rumbling.

At dawn the snow was still falling.

FOR eight days it snowed. Mists hovered over the valleys, and during that eight days the Matterhorn was invisible. At last a glorious light greeted the dawn of the ninth day. Shining with dazzling whiteness, white from the pasture lands to the very tip of its crest, the Matterhorn sprang forth towards the blue sky, bluer than the sea. The sight was of a rare and almost divine beauty. On the tenth day a party of climbers, having overcome the snowy ridges, stopped appalled on reaching the summit.

On the cross a crucified man was gazing at them with a mad stare in his wide-open eyes, his mouth twisted with a sinister grin, his fingers distorted and contracted. Icicles depended from the extremities of the cross-pieces. A fringe of snow festooned the iron



A ray of sun darted from the sky and projected the cross, immense and unearthly, upon the screen of clouds.

posts, as also the body of the man himself, whose head swayed to and fro, rocked by the harsh wind.

And just as the terrified climbers were about to draw back, a bird, perching on the skull of the dead man, flew silently away.

Photo.
Mault & Fox.

HERR KREISLER TALKS

(AN INTERVIEW)

WE live in a world that is in a state of flux. Everything is changing, the most abject misery exists beside vast wealth, the cultured classes of small means are slipping down the social scale. These victims of fixed incomes are the relics of a past age, and the standards which pertained in their day have been swept away.

Such unsettled conditions are nowhere more strongly reflected than in the world of art. Poets, painters, musicians, all are striving after new forms, seeking new ways of expressing themselves, casting aside the forms which hitherto have governed their art. To these men, the leaders of the new art movements, the old forms are obsolete, utterly antiquated.

The new men have something so new to express that they look upon the old forms as hopeless for conveying to the public those ideas which lie behind their work. The consequence is that we have among painters the Cubists and Vorticists and other offshoots of the Cubist movement, with strange pictures that few except the actual painters understand, pictures not of material things as they appear to our eyes, but of something intangible such as the sensations and impressions that visible objects create in the painters. They seem to be striving to paint a chart of their souls on canvas, but to most of us the canvases are meaningless.

I often think how much poorer the world would be if Rembrandt had sought to express himself like some of the modern painters. Instead of that, he sought to reproduce the beauty he saw around him, and to let other people see that beauty through his eyes, so that they, too, would be able to share the lovely impressions he enjoyed when his eye first lighted on the subject for his picture.

Some of the modern poets are as grotesque as the painters. The stress and turmoil of to-day reacts upon them and colours their work most vividly. They have replaced the beautiful rhythms with a series of staccato jerks that are very distracting. They are shattering the exquisite images and replacing them with something disquieting. They do not fear to display the worst side of life, and instead of calling up in our minds lovely visions, they steep our souls in misery. Those who write most bitterly are the greatest idealists. They are

haunted by an instinct for beauty, but the misery around them revolts their souls. So they seek to remodel the world, make it better and brighter, thinking that only by shocking people out of their smug complacency will all the misery and ugliness be swept away.

As with painters and poets, so it is with musicians. The ultra-modernists seek to express their genius differently. For melody and harmony they have no use; euphony is regarded as a weakness. They are casting them into the dustcart of the past. Those composers who give us sweet sounds to delight the ear are regarded as children chanting the alphabet. The form which to Bach was all-sufficing, to them means nothing. Their ideas refuse to be imprisoned in past musical forms. They are inventing their own scales, calling for new instruments to interpret their ideas because the old instruments are unable to give them the series of sounds required. They seek to replace harmony with discords, to argue that sounds hitherto looked upon as ugly when commingled are as a matter of fact more beautiful and satisfying to the ear, and much more significant to the imagination, than are all the harmonies ever woven in the music of the past.

I frankly admit that there are some of the modern composers whom I do not understand. They speak another musical language than that which I have learned. Some, indeed, make a big noise which fails to satisfy my musical soul. Yet these men are many of them fine musicians—some have true genius—but they seem to be leading music into a wilderness of chaos.

TO me the leaders of the new movements in music and painting and poetry may be symbolized as a potter crouching over his wheel, a formless lump of clay before him. The lovely curves and flowing forms of all the pots that were ever made in the past do not please him. He desires to mould his lump of clay into something never seen before—something queer, ugly, anything that will make the onlooker gasp or shudder.

With Keats, I think that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." The mainspring of beauty is form and balance and harmony, and these still satisfy me. Other men, of course, are entitled to think differently, and we can only watch and see what comes of the experiments. But if they have a message to give to the world, it is much better to speak in a language that people understand and not to mouth in a meaningless tongue. Anyone can make a noise, but not everyone can make music, and it is to be regretted that some men who can make real music are contenting themselves with making a noise. It is as though they thought that the man who makes the biggest noise makes the biggest success.

Most people sum up success as the acquisition of material things—money, motor-cars, fine houses, servants. But useful as these material things may be, success to the artist means something more. The true artist is consumed with a desire to create. He has the power within him to write a piece of music, a poem, to paint a picture. Something deep down urges him to do these things. He cannot help himself. He must obey. The creative impulse in art is stronger than he.

People may acclaim his work, shower gold and praises on him while the world talks about his success. On the other hand, his work may be ignored, spurned. Is he less successful? By the common standard, yes; by the true standard, no. His real success lies in the joy of creating the work, irrespective of whether people accept it or reject it. When that work is complete he has attained his desire.

I am afraid that art, so commonly regarded as a virtue, is really a passion. People are reproved for over-eating, for drunkenness, for over-smoking. Ordinary people often find themselves in prison because of their vices. The man with a passion for drink gets haled before the magistrate and is fined; the man who in the heat of passion assaults another may find himself serving a sentence of hard labour. He is treated as a menace to the community, as a person who should be placed under restraint. His passion is regarded as a danger, and law-abiding citizens demand to be protected from it.

How much more fortunate is the artist! Art is his great passion. Instead of being reproved for it, like those who gratify their other passions, he is praised for it. More, he is actually paid considerable sums to do the thing that he most wants to do, to exercise his passion for music. Think how pleasant this must be.

Where other people are compelled to restrain their passions, the artist may freely exercise his passion for art, and instead of being blamed and punished, he is praised and admired. No wonder the artist is looked upon with envy. He is really a very lucky person, all things considered.

If by some strange circumstance the position were reversed and a law were passed making art a punishable offence, and if all artists were liable to be thrown into prison, it would still not prevent me from playing the fiddle. It might drive me to some underground cellar where I could practise my art undisturbed, but it would not stop me—

no threat of punishment would stop me. I simply must play the fiddle, and if it were illegal to do so, then I must confess that my devotion to art would drive me to break the law.

Even the artist, however, finds a fly in the otherwise faultless amber. He is not a free agent. He cannot do what he likes. He may wander about the earth, see many lands, yet he is practically a prisoner. His whole life is mapped out for him. Mine is mapped out for me for a long, long time to come. A year from to-day I must journey to such and such a city and play a certain piece of music; in eighteen months I must go somewhere else to play this or that concerto. The prospect sometimes appals me. No matter what I may want to do myself, on those dates I must make that fixed journey; at certain times I must appear on the platform and play the violin.

Many times friends have asked me to go away with them for a few days.

"I'm sorry," I have said, "but I have a concert at so-and-so."

I have been frankly envious of their power to go where they like and do whatsoever they please. But such liberty is not for me. The artist has no true freedom. He is led about the world in chains, the slave of his art. Lightly as the chains may rest on him, they still become irksome at times. The artist who devotes his life to art is as human as those mortals who devote their lives to commerce. Just as men sometimes rebel against going to the office and feel an intense desire to break the usual routine and stay at home, so the artist also occasionally feels a spirit of rebellion against the routine; he also wants to stay at home. But he dare not disappoint the public, dare not please himself, because he knows that by so doing he will deprive so many hundreds of people of their pleasure.

LIFE, however, has its compensations. The artist sees the world in many different aspects, and enjoys experiences that are denied to those whose livelihoods chain them to one place. My recent visit to Japan, for instance, is marked by several incidents I am not likely soon to forget, and in the light of after events one incident during my visit to Tokio stands out particularly. We were dining one night with some Japanese guests when I felt the queerest of sensations, as though I had suddenly been transported by magic aboard a steamer.

"Look!" said my wife, and pointed to some of the lamps.

I glanced at the lamps, which were swinging and swaying in the oddest manner for no apparent reason. Their movement added to my impression that I had been suddenly whisked aboard a steamer.

"It's only one of our little earthquakes," said one of our guests.

I was making some laughing comment on it, when another Japanese reproved me in the gravest manner. "You must not joke about it," he said, seriously. "Something terrible will happen soon."

Those words, alas, came true! The Tokio which feasted and fêted me is almost wiped out by the earthquake. Many a time since that dreadful Japanese catastrophe these words have recurred to me, and I have wondered if the speaker could have had any foreknowledge of what was impending. Who knows?

The innate politeness of the Japanese is a thing for the Western mind to marvel at. They have schooled themselves to keep their tempers in a way we shall never do. I remember seeing two cyclists come into collision in circumstances which would have aroused the anger of any two Western men. The two Japanese bowed to each other most profoundly and apologized, whereas two Europeans would have been swearing at each other and probably punching each other's heads. That is one of the differences between East and West.

Another fact which struck me strangely concerned the newspaper criticisms of my playing. Instead of being written as they are in our newspapers, each and every one was in the form of a poem. After my concerts I was also presented with poems, as well as the most wonderful golden robes and magnificent porcelain.

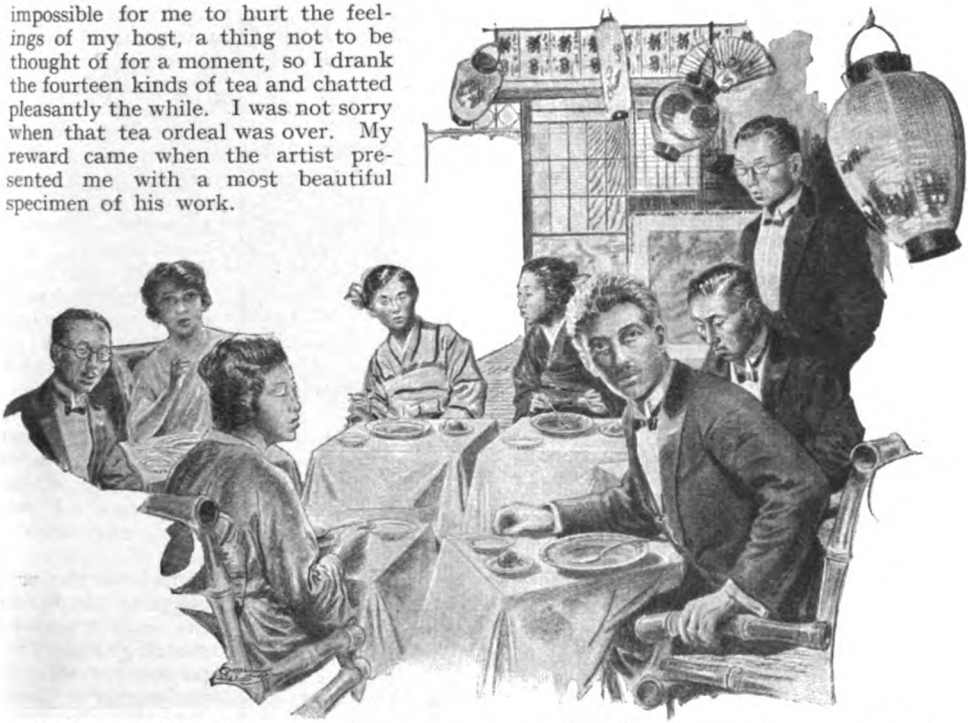
The music I played was quite strange to them, they did not understand it; it is so utterly unlike their own that Western and Eastern music are as the poles asunder. Yet the Japanese were wonderfully appreciative and most attentive.

To Western ears Japanese music is very weird and strange, absolutely beyond our comprehension. Some of the greatest vocalists in Japan, artists who are the equivalent of Melba and Caruso, would evoke laughter if they sang their Japanese songs on the English concert platform, whereas if we really understood their technique and music we should realize that they were giving brilliant performances. The European, when he does not understand a thing, laughs; the Japanese behaves with true dignity and respects the feelings of the other.

It was this fine example of dignity and courtesy which brought me through something of an ordeal when I was being entertained by one of the most famous Japanese artists. He had striven to do me the highest honour possible, and for my special benefit

he had prepared no fewer than fourteen different kinds of tea.

I am not a great tea-drinker, and I find one cup of China tea satisfies my thirst and pleases my palate. But the fourteen cups of tea were set before me. It was impossible for me to hurt the feelings of my host, a thing not to be thought of for a moment, so I drank the fourteen kinds of tea and chatted pleasantly the while. I was not sorry when that tea ordeal was over. My reward came when the artist presented me with a most beautiful specimen of his work.



I glanced at the lamps, which were swaying in the oddest manner for no apparent reason. "It's only one of our little earthquakes," said one of the guests.

The general unrest in China is marked by the roving bands of bandits, who drive a thriving business by capturing Europeans and holding them to ransom. The bandits swoop down, round up a dozen or so Europeans, and retreat with them to their fastnesses in the mountains. The payment of the ransom may lead to the release of the captives, but many of the prisoners are never heard of again. Life in China is certainly rather exciting. Only the day before I left Peking, the bandits made a sudden attack and captured about two hundred Europeans; luckily, I was not among them.

While in Peking I had the pleasure of giving a concert to a purely Chinese audience who had never heard European music before. The Chinese overwhelmed me with kindness, made all the arrangements, and when I played what was to them my strange music, they listened as intently as any European audience. The outstanding feature of the concert was Cyril Scott's "Lotus Land." It appealed to them so much that they made me play it three times, which is a very fine tribute indeed to the composer, who has managed to strike the Eastern note so accurately. There are many pieces of music that seem to European ears to savour of the East, yet if these pieces were played before Eastern audiences they would seem just as strange as the other Western pieces. When an audience of Chinese enjoy a piece as they did that of Cyril Scott, it is a proof that the English composer has assimilated the colouring of the East in a most wonderful manner.

Music in Europe generally seems to have gone more or less mad, to have broken quite away from its old traditions. But the English composers seem to be retaining their sanity in spite of the universal upheaval.

Elgar, of course, is a fine man, full of high ideals, and this idealism shines through his music like sunlight through a filmy cloud. "The Dream of Gerontius" is the work of a genius, with many pages of sheer inspiration throughout. I have been told that Elgar sold this sublime work for a trifling sum—twenty pounds, I think it was—but that has nothing to do with the

wonder of the music. The finest works of art often do not sell at all until the rising generations find the beauty that the former generation missed. In "Gerontius" Sir Edward Elgar has written music that will live when most of the contemporaneous music is forgotten.

My regard for Elgar dates far back. To him I suppose I owe some of the happiest moments of my life. I have played many pieces in many lands before strangely-varied audiences, yet of all my experiences on the concert platform the one that gave me the greatest pleasure was when I played Elgar's violin concerto for the first time at that Philharmonic concert in Queen's Hall some fourteen years ago.

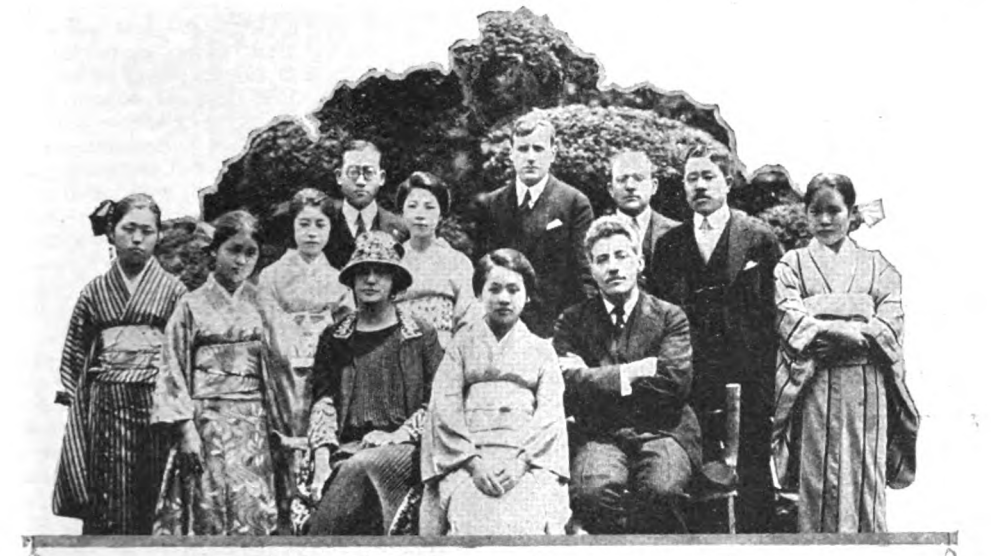
I look back on the kindliness of Elgar. I recall the rapture the first time I played the last movement. I was in the composer's study. Scattered all around on the floor were the sheets of manuscript where the composer had dropped them to dry as they came from his pen. We picked them up between us, numbered them hurriedly, and I set them, still barely dry, upon the music stand, picked up my violin, and played.

An impression of Kreisler, by "Matt."

As I played, I knew that he had given us a work that was great, full of inspired passages, and when I had finished I turned to him and, gripping his hands, thanked him for choosing me to interpret his work to the world.

In Sir Edward Elgar, England possesses a great musician, a master who is eminently sound and sane, whose best work makes for peace and happiness amid the misery and distractions of to-day. I am happy to count this unassuming genius, this kindly English gentleman, my friend.

The artist in his early years may starve for his art, he may give of his best for a few pounds. To the discerning few the promise of the young artist may be plain; by the many it will be quite unnoticed.



Kreisler and his wife, with some of their Japanese friends—a photograph taken during his recent tour.

More than one painter has sold for a five-pound note a better picture than he has afterwards painted for a fee five hundred times as large.

Young artists who are struggling against adverse circumstances should take heart. I recall the time when one of the most famous impresarios in London voiced his amazement when I demanded fifteen guineas for playing at a concert, and forthwith refused to pay what he considered an exorbitant fee! I, too, was struggling in those days, and I have a memory of playing once at Bournemouth when my share of the receipts of the concert came to the sum of four pounds. The irony of it was that I had to pay my accompanist a fee of six guineas. But if that concert brought me no pecuniary reward, the exercise of my art then gave me no less pleasure than it does now.

Those famous lines of Kipling:—

"Down to Gehenna or up to the throne,
He travels the fastest who travels alone,"

have often been quoted by people who believe that, above all men, the artist is better single. It is an unfortunate fact that many artists seem to make a sorry mess of marriage, and their matrimonial ventures often turn out to be failures.

Nevertheless, I think Kipling was mistaken when he wrote these lines. So far as I am concerned, his dictum is in direct opposition to my own experience. I believe that a good woman can lead a man to achieve almost anything, to attain heights far beyond his reach were she not there to help and sustain him.

In gratitude I record the fact that I am most happily married. No man could be happier, no man have a more devoted companion. Not until I found my wife did I find myself as an artist. I owe everything to her. Whatever I have done, whatever I may have achieved, is due solely to her sweet influence. What I am my wife has made me. She has helped me over all difficulties, given me courage when hopes were low, set my fiddle singing joyfully again when my fingers were tired and my heart ached.

I can truly say: "Thank God for my wife, for her love and devotion and kindly ways." The artist who is happily married, as I am, is among the most fortunate beings on earth.

FREDDIE FINDS HIMSELF

by

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMERON

TALENT is an elusive quantity. It never does to despair concerning the lack of it. Some people will dig, and dig, and dig, and find nothing, and then suddenly—perhaps when they are reaching middle-age—they will discover that they can do something as well as, if not better than, anyone else.

It cannot be said that up to the age of twenty-six Freddie Oppincott had shown any particular ability. Indeed, he was the butt of his family, as he had been of his school. He had tried seven different professions and had foresworn them all, or perhaps it would be truer to say that the professions had foresworn him. In spite of all this, Freddie was an incurable optimist. There was no holding him. He lived with his father, his elder brother John, who ragged him mercilessly, and his two sisters, Emma and Jane, who mellowed their ragging with a genuine streak of affection. Fortunately for Freddie, his father was a fairly well-to-do coal merchant. The family lived at Highgate. Mr. Oppincott had long since given up all hope of Freddie accomplishing anything, except perhaps marrying a rich girl. He was by way of being good-looking, and he could talk. Talking was certainly his one talent. But the trouble is that to exploit talking profitably you must be able to talk well. And that could not be said of Freddie Oppincott.

At the time when this story commences he had been in a state of unemployment for two months. And then one morning he sprang the latest bombshell on the family. He announced that he was going to be a private detective!

Even Mr. Oppincott was forced to laugh. And Emma and Jane said:—

"Don't be so utterly absurd, Freddie."

But the matter was already a partial *fait accompli*. He had taken a little room, described as an office, in Bloomsbury. And in the morning paper was an advertisement worded as follows:—

Must hubby really stay at the office till midnight? Is it really mother that wifey spends the week-ends with? What is your partner always going to Paris for? If in doubt on all these problems, consult Pimpleton's Detective Agency, 9, Eurydice Street, Bloomsbury. Pimpleton never fails.

Freddie announced that he was Pimpleton. He was quite impervious to the shafts of derision hurled at him by the other members of the family. Having had a good deal of time on his hands during the last two months, he had been reading detective stories. His mind had become obsessed with visions of himself in a cloth cap (with ear flaps), tracking down murderers, discovering the duchess's stolen tiara, bringing the faithless to justice.

"Don't you make any mistake," he said. "I'm not such a fool as I look."

"No; but even then there's a wide margin to fill up," replied John. And Emma said, sternly, in that delightfully candid manner that characterizes family life:—

"Freddie, you have got every quality which a detective should not have, and you've not got a single quality that he should have. You've no perception, no logic, no reasoning power, and, moreover, you talk too much. You give yourself away every time you open your mouth. Don't be a complete ass."

And Jane said:—

"Why don't you write detective stories? It's much easier, and far less dangerous."

And Papa Oppincott said:—

"I must be off. Where are my boots? Don't smoke too many cigarettes, Freddie, sitting in your chambers waiting for the Countess to call."

And they all departed to their various vocations.

Copyright, 1924, by Stacy Aumonier.

IT would be painful to record the sarcasm, gibes, and derision to which Freddie was subjected during the ensuing ten days. It reached a degree of cruelty that could only happen amongst people who are really fond of each other.

Freddie went out and bought a cloth cap (with ear flaps). Then he hired a roll-top desk, and littered it with papers, ink, and pens. And then—a really bright inspiration—several cardboard files which he labelled conspicuously "The Lord Harridge Case"; "Mrs. Jocelyn Mountjoy and others"; "The Weir Case," and so on.

He purchased many tins of cigarettes, and he sat at his desk all day long, waiting for answers to his advertisement, which appeared regularly in several daily papers. He smoked cigarettes and read detective stories. He always had a drawer open so that if anyone called he could slip the book away. He had a shrewd suspicion that real detectives didn't read detective stories.

It was on the tenth day that the astonishing thing happened. He had gone out to lunch and was feeling a trifle discouraged concerning his enterprise. On returning to his "office" he found a dark, foreign-looking gentleman reading his notice pinned on the door: "Out at lunch, back in twenty minutes."

The foreign gentleman started at sight of him and exclaimed:—

"Mr. Pimpleton?"

"That's me," said Freddie.

"I wish to see you urgently."

"Come inside, Mr.—er——"

They went inside, and Freddie smuggled away "Jim Slooth's Last Case" just in time. They both sat down, and Freddie said:—

"Well, now, what can I do for you?"

The mysterious visitor looked furtively around. Then he said, confidentially:—

"You, I believe, handled ze case concerning ze stolen bonds for Count Tisza?"

"No."

"What! But my sister understood from the Baron himself on the telephone this morning that you——"

"Oh, well, perhaps I did," said Freddie, realizing he had made a bloomer. "I have so many cases, you see, I'm apt to forget." And he glanced significantly at his labelled files.

The foreigner glanced at the files, too, and seemed satisfied. Then he leant forward and tapped Freddie's knee.

"My sister, the Countess Sforza, is in great trouble. Listen!"

"It does not concern that, anyway. It was only a recommendation. My sister, the Countess Sforza, is in great trouble. Listen!".

Fame at last! Freddie listened.

"Doubtless you know of her by reputation? Hein? Well, she has the beautiful place at Steeplehurst, in Sussex. This week she entertains a small house-party—seven guns. The guests arrived on Saturday last. On Sunday evening she goes to dress for dinner. Her pearl necklace, worth thousands of pounds, is missing. A search is made, but ze guests are not informed. Zey have all announce to stop one veek. All ze servants has been searched, and zeir boxes and properties. A detective arrive from Scotland Yard on ze Monday afternoon. He passes as a guest—a Mr. Battesley. Zis is Wednesday afternoon. So far no clue, nozing discovered."

"Perhaps it was a burglar," said Freddie, brightly.

"Zere is no sign of burglary. No one has entered ze house unknown, or left it. Ze guests still remain. My sister—she is in despair. She rings up Count Tisza, an old friend. 'Go to Pimpleton,' he says; 'he'll solve ze mystery for you.' My sister bade me come to town at once to try to persuade you to return mit me. Zere is a train at five-ten vich gets us down in comfortable time for dinner."

"All right, Mr.—er—Forcer?"

"My name is Baron Hunyadi Sergius Szychyllmski."

"Oh, really! I see. Well, I'll just have to go home first."

"Home!"

"Yes. I must go to Highgate and tell Dad and the others and then pack up. I suppose you wear evening-dress for dinner down there, don't you?"

The Baron seemed a little mystified. Perhaps he had misunderstood the English of this famous detective. He said:—

"I will meet you on ze train, zen, Mr. Pimpleton. And—one vord!—my sister suggest zat you come as a private gentleman, not a sportsman. Zat would give you ze excuse to hang about ven ze others are out. She suggest you come as a professor or scientist, or explorer. If zere is any special branch of science you have exceeded at or—doubtless you have travelled a lot. Vat do you suggest? Vat is your special genius?"

Freddie considered for some moments, then he said:—

"Well, I'm not bad at snooker-pool."

"Snookerpool!" The Baron turned the word over in his brain. Snookerpool sounded distinctly erudite. He was too polite to make inquiries. "Goot, zen! We vill say ze eminent authority on Snookerpool. What name shall we announce?"

"My name's Oppincott. I mean—why not call me Mr. Oppincott?"

"Mr. Oppincott, ze Snookerpoolist. Goot!"

LUCKILY for Freddie, when he got home neither his father nor John had returned from business. The two girls were there, and he announced with magnificent calm that he was called away on a case to recover the Countess Forcer's pearl necklace. The girls for a long time thought he was fooling. It was not until he had commandeered John's evening dress, shoes, collar, tie, and splutter brush and packed these things that they began to take him seriously.

He caught the train by the skin of his teeth. He would indeed have missed it, but for the fact that the Baron was waiting for him feverishly by the booking-office, with two first-class tickets already taken. They scrambled into the train.

The journey down was uneventful. Freddie talked all the time, but it was difficult to know how far the Baron was impressed. He wanted to talk about the case, but he got little opportunity. He only managed to impress one thing on Freddie. He was not to make himself known to the other detective—Mr. Battesley. The Countess was disappointed that Mr. Battesley had so far not even got a clue. Pimpleton was to work on his own lines, and of course he was to have free run of the house.

When they arrived at Steeplehurst Towers they found two tired colonels drinking cocktails in the lounge hall. The rest of the party were dressing for dinner. The Baron introduced Freddie to the two colonels as "Mr. Oppincott, ze eminent authority on Snoddlepole." It was fortunate that he had forgotten the word snooker-pool, because if the matter had been put to the test either of the tired colonels could have given Freddie fifty per cent. on any game played on the green baize. They regarded him languidly, either too polite or too bored to inquire what Snoddlepole was.

The Countess was very anxious to see Mr. Pimpleton, and he was ushered up to her boudoir at once. He felt a little dubious about removing his cloth cap (with ear flaps). No detective looks the real thing without such. It was only the questioning and rather challenging glances of the two colonels in the hall which prompted him eventually to leave it behind.

The Countess was small and dark and agitated. The loss of her pearl necklace seemed to have driven her to a frenzy of lapidary display. She appeared to be wearing the remainder of her jewellery, in

case that too was stolen. Her knowledge of English was far more limited than that of her brother. She began by saying :—

"I spik English bad. My brozzer tell you of the lost pearl. Zis man, Battesley, he find nozing. It ees to you I look now. Zese guests depart Saturday. Zis is Vednesday. Ze house is disposed to you. Inquire, look, search as you vill. One vord also. Ze Baron and I, ve know of zis. No von else. Not even my daughter."

"Right-o," said Freddie.

She came up to him and said, tensely :—

"Listen. In ze short vile ze bell gongs to dinner. You gom to dinner? Or no? You stay here, perhaps, search ze guests' effects vile we hold zem at dinner? Perhaps you have dinner after by yourself. Hein?"

By the base of the hall staircase Freddie's nostrils had been assailed by an aroma that might have been roast pheasant, or it might have been roast quail. He was hungry. He replied :—

"No, I think I'll start making my depositions after dinner, Countess. Work like mine can't be done on an empty stomach."

The Countess turned to Freddie and said: "I spik English bad. Ze house is disposed to you. Inquire, look, search as you vill."

He did not quite know what "depositions" meant, but it was a word he had frequently come across in "Jim Slooth's Last Case." It apparently impressed the Baron too, for he repeated "he makes depositions," and he translated it into the rummy lingo they spoke between them. The Countess appeared satisfied, and he was allowed to retire to his room and to put on John's evening clothes.

When he found himself seated at the dining table, after having been introduced to the company as Mr. Toddingpot, the eminent authority on Snoddlepole, he rejoiced that he had made this decision. In the first place, the dinner was unbelievably good. He had never imagined such foods and wines existed. In the second place, he found himself sitting next to the daughter of the house. She was an extremely pretty girl, with dark, mischievous eyes, and she spoke English like a native. (He found out afterwards that she had been educated at Girton.) He found her an enchanting listener. There were nearly twenty guests seated round the table, and the noise of conversation was so loud that he almost had to shout into her ear. They were eating red mullet, when she suddenly said :—

"I'm most thrilled that you are an authority on Snoddlepole, Mr. Toddingpot."

"Oppincott is my name," said Freddie, in order to gain time.

"Of course. I'm so sorry. By the way, do you consider the Einstein theory is going to affect the practice of Snoddlepole?"

It was obvious that this was a dangerous woman. He was not going to enjoy himself so much as he had hoped. The only way to treat this onslaught was to counter it by asking questions of his own. He said "No" rapidly, and almost in the same breath :—

"Are you Oxford or Cambridge?"

"Cambridge."

"Good! I'm so glad. So am I. Can you float?"

"What? Companies?"

"You're pulling my leg, Miss Forcer."

"You're asking for it, Mr. Hottentot."

There was a lot of fun in this girl. If she would only talk sensibly, about lawn tennis, for instance, or music-halls, or tobacco, he could have a good time with her.

He found himself eating pheasant when he suddenly remembered that he was a detective. He had to discover which of these guests had stolen the pearl necklace. He glanced round the table. A more unthieving-looking crowd had surely never foregathered. They all looked well-off, well-fed, and slightly vacant, entirely innocent of anything except the knowledge of what is done or what is not done. Stealing pearl necklaces is not done. No, there was only one saturnine-looking individual present at all. He was seated in the far corner.

"Who is that chap over there?" Freddie asked his neighbour.

"That's Mr. Battesley."

The real detective! That was no go, then. But still, you never could tell. A sleek exterior sometimes concealed an itching palm. That wasn't right. He was mixing things a bit, especially wines. He would have to keep a clear head for the great work in front of him. Depositions, eh?

When the dinner was over and the ladies had retired, Freddie realized that this was a good opportunity for him to commence his work. He went stealthily out of the dining-room. He had reached the foot of the stairs when he heard a quiet voice behind say :—

"Mr. Oppincott!"

He turned. It was Battesley, the detective. An uncomfortable feeling crept over him. He had been told not to have anything to do with his rival. But there was a sense of power about this man a litt'e difficult to ignore. The detective said :—

"May I have a word with you in the billiard-room?"

Freddie hesitated.

"Well, I don't mind playing you fifty up, but I've got some work to do."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Battesley, and led the way in. Having shut the door, he turned to Freddie and said :—

"I have received information that you are a private detective that has been sent for at the Countess's direction. Here is my card. You know my mission here. The Countess is a very highly-strung woman, a little impetuous. I think it will be to the advantage of all parties concerned and most likely to be conducive of results if we work together."

"Oh, I don't know," said Freddie, weakly.

"I am quite prepared to place at your disposal all the information I have so far acquired," continued the detective, ignoring Freddie's protest. "The Countess was wearing the necklace on the evening of the twelfth. On retiring to bed she locked the necklace up in her jewel cabinet. On the following evening, when she went to put it on, she found it to be missing."

"Well, I never!" said Freddie.

"The key of the cabinet she kept in her chatelaine, which she carried about with her all day. No one could have entered her bedroom during the night. The doors were locked. The key must have been taken from her chatelaine during the day and replaced. The Countess says that, as far as she can remember, the chatelaine was never out of her sight. Of course, she put it down many times, on the piano for instance, and on the luncheon-table, but she never observed anyone touch it. It must have been done very deftly by someone who was near to her and very intimate."

"Fancy!"

"I have made a careful inquiry into the character and record of every one of the servants and also of the guests. One of the under-gardeners has a bad record, but he was never seen to approach the house all day. There is no one else upon whom one would dare to cast the slightest suspicion. But in order not to run any risks I have, unbeknown to them, searched all their rooms, luggage, and effects. It seems probable that, if one of the guests had taken it, he would have made some excuse to get away as quickly as possible. But no one has intimated any desire to leave before next Saturday."

"It's extraordinary, isn't it?" said Freddie. "Perhaps she dropped it somewhere. Did you look under the bed?"

"Now you are a young man," the detective continued. "And I observed that you were not altogether repulsed in your attentions to the daughter of the house, Miss Olga Szychyllmski. It is there that I think we may stumble on some solution."

"The daughter! You don't mean to say that you think she pinched it?"

"You may have observed that the Countess and her daughter are hardly on speaking terms. There has been a row. The daughter wishes to marry a profligate young man named Julius Stinnie. The mother won't hear of it. She has not even informed her daughter about the necklace. This young man has been forbidden the house, but he haunts the neighbourhood. The daughter meets him clandestinely."

"Well, you do surprise me!" exclaimed Freddie. "I thought she seemed a top-hole girl—a bit too clever, perhaps."

"I am, of course, working entirely on a supposition. The young man has no money and is a *roué*. Nevertheless, he is well-connected. He would probably be able to dispose of a pearl necklace among some of his associates. Whether he has been able to persuade the daughter to connive at the theft remains to be seen. Whether it was she who actually removed the necklace and passed it on to him remains to be proved, but no one has more intimate knowledge of the Countess's movements and habits, or an easier access to her person. I have tried to make friends with her, but she repulses me. That is where I think you might succeed. She has obviously taken to you. You could keep her under observation. Take her out on the river, pump her, make love to her if you like."

Oh, if only John could hear all this! He, the despised Freddie, being appealed to by a real detective, and urged to make love to the daughter of a countess! A glow of manliness crept over him. He wanted to say:—

"Yes, we professionals must stick together. I will sacrifice myself. The girl shall be made love to."

And yet he did not like Battesley. There was something hard, cruel, and forbidding about the man. It seemed shabby to make love to a girl in order to worm secrets out of her. It seemed shabbier to get someone else to do it for you. The manliness wavered.

"I will think over what you say, Mr. Battesley," and he bowed in quite a dignified manner and left the room.

IN the morning he wondered whether the other detective had told him the story to put him off the scent. If he went punting about the river with Olga he would be out of the way, and the coast would be clear for Battesley to do as he liked. Ha, ha! No, he was not going to be taken in like that. He went down to breakfast determined to act on his own. But how? He hadn't the faintest idea how to begin. Thank goodness Battesley had searched all these people's private rooms and effects. It would save him from a most distasteful task.

After breakfast the Countess sent for him.

"Vell?" she said. "You make some discover? Yes?"

"Not yet," replied Freddie. "I am making my depositions. I have several people under close observation."

"No clue yet?"

"Not yet."

"Vell, the house is disposed to you. It is urgent. I trust you."

"I'm sure, Countess, you'll have no cause to ultimately regret it," said Freddie, splitting his infinitive with a magnificent gesture.

In the garden he found Olga among the phlox and campion. She looked wickedly attractive.

"Good morning, Mr. Oddinglot," she said. "Come for a little punt up the reach, will you?"

Now this was just what he had decided not to do. It was what Battesley wanted him to do—to get rid of him. His duty was to hang about the house and search for the pearl necklace. Great bumble bees hung heavily on the phlox. The air was filled with their droning, and with the song of birds, and the distant lowing of cattle.

"I should love to," he said.

In half an hour's time they were gliding up a backwater. Fortunately he could punt—not very well, but sufficiently well to get the boat along. He slowed up among the reeds and rested.

"Now I want you to tell me all about Snoddlepole," she said.

Freddie lit a cigarette.

"As a matter of fact," he replied, after a lengthy pause, "I'd rather not talk about Snoddlepole. When I'm on a holiday I like to get away from it."

"Are you on a holiday?" she said. Olga was one of those ingenuous girls who evade omniscience, or if there is something they do not know, *you* are not going to find out. Her dark eyes mocked him.

"I'm having a very nice holiday, thank you," he said, simply.

She laughed. "Tell me all about yourself. You amuse me."

This was the kind of invitation Freddie liked. Without any preamble he told her all about Dad and John and Emma and Jane, about his own chequered career right up to the time when he became a detective.

"And what are you doing now?" she asked.

"I'm resting on my punt pole," he answered.

Oh, very clever, Master Freddie! He was feeling extremely happy and pleased with himself.

"This is all very interesting," the girl said. "Only, considering what a lot of things

you've crowded into your brilliant career. I don't see how you could have found time to become an authority on Snoddlepole."

"Look here," answered Freddie, "that's all nonsense—it's a mistake. I don't even know what Snoddlepole is."

The punt shook with the girl's laughter.

"What I want to know is—what are you doing here? Mother doesn't know you. Uncle doesn't know you. None of the guests knows anything about you. Uncle went up and fetched you from town, and now you don't even know what Snoddlepole is!"

She was too clever for him. She was manœuvring to defend her lover, of course, the man who had stolen the necklace.

"Do you want me to go away?" he said, not without bitterness.

"Oh, no. I like you. It's jolly to have someone really young and innocent about the place."

Little devil! "I think we'll push on a bit."

They did not get back till lunch-time; the girl, mischievous and provocative; the boy, bewildered and fascinated.

"I'll play you at tennis this afternoon," she said.

"She doesn't mean to leave me alone," he thought. "Oh, well——"

AFTER lunch the Countess sent for him.

"Vell, have you any clue yet?"

"Not yet, Countess, but I have every hope."

"Is there anyone you suspect?"

"I'd rather not say for the moment."

"Bien!"

Battesley nodded at him approvingly as he entered the luncheon room. Most of the elder men were out shooting and would not be back till the evening. During the course of lunch Freddie decided that Battesley was right. It was this girl's lover who had stolen the necklace. Her whole manner indicated it. She suspected him of being there as a spy and she was going to look after him. Instead of him spying upon her, she was going to spy upon him. She had him in her clutches. Well, he wouldn't play tennis with her. He would refuse. He would begin to make his own researches. But——? It seemed much more difficult to be a detective than the story books had

"Do you want me to go away?" he said. "Oh, no," she replied. "I

led one to suspect. This man Battesley apparently worked on a system. He would go up to his own room after lunch and think the whole thing out.

When the rest rose from the table he avoided Olga's glance, slid out of the room, and dashed upstairs and locked his door. He then remembered that he had never sent a postcard home, as promised. So he wrote saying that he had arrived, that he had not yet traced the Countess's necklace, but that he was getting together some important information and hoped to trace the thief by Saturday, when he returned. (He afterwards put this postcard on the hall table with some other letters for the post.)

He had just written his postcard when there was a knock at the door. He opened it. It was Olga. She said, demurely :—

"Oh, Mr. Loppinott, I'm so sorry to disturb you, but a young couple have just arrived and want to play tennis. I *do* wish you would come and make up a four. There is no one else."

What was he to do ? He played tennis till tea-time. The young couple departed, and then Olga said :—

"Now, wouldn't you like to take me on the river again ? "

No. A thousand times no ! She touched him ever so gently on the forearm.

"You had better put on your sweater. It sometimes gets suddenly chilly in the evening."

A starling was making an awful to-do up in the apple tree.

"Right. Oh, thanks awfully. Of course I would."

When he found himself once more among the reeds up that backwater, and Olga was playfully letting the stream trickle through her white fingers, he knew that the reason he wanted to avoid her was that if it were true that her lover had stolen the necklace, he didn't want to be the one instrumental in discovering the fact. He didn t want to be associated with anything that would give her pain. Indeed, he

like you. It's jolly to have someone really young and innocent about the place."

wanted to bring her joy and happiness. He wanted to take her in his arms and say:—

"I love you. I love you. I love you." Or words to that effect.

Her face caught the reflected glitter from the water. She was wearing most exquisite open-work silk stockings.

"I'm not cut out for a detective," he thought to himself.

"Well, my pensive friend?" she said, after he had been gazing at her abstractedly for at least five minutes.

"Life's a rummy go," he said, dolefully.

"It is indeed," agreed she, eagerly. "Your perspicacity leaves me breathless."

As though accepting that as a challenge, Freddie stumbled across the punt and sat in the seat facing her. Her eyes were watching him questioningly. He took his courage in both hands and also both her hands. He said:—

"I sha'n't want to go back on Saturday."

She made no attempt to withdraw hers. She looked at him quizzically.

"Won't you? But your mission will be accomplished."

"What mission?"

"Oh, I forgot; you're just here on a holiday, Mr. Polyglot."

"Be serious with me for five minutes. This fellow you're engaged to——"

"What's that?"

She withdrew her hands. Her eyes narrowed.

"I know all about it. You're going to marry that chap, Julius Stinnie."

"Who told you that?"

"It wouldn't be fair to say."

The expression of her face suddenly changed. She spoke rather bitterly.

"Since it seems to interest you, I'll tell you the truth. I'm not going to. It's off. I found out things that—well, anyway, it's off."

Freddie's mentality received various shocks. Firstly, a shock of exultation. If Julius Stinnie was off, why should not Freddie be on? Secondly, but a much milder shock, a shock to his professional vanity as a detective. He was on the wrong track. He was doing just what Battesley wanted him to do—wasting two days making love to the daughter of the house, and it was all on a false scent. He registered a mental vow of revenge against Battesley. He must give this girl up and return to the fray.

He certainly did return, but it was nearly dark when the punt glided into the boat-house. The lawn was damp with evening dew, and the girl's hair was all awry.

THE position, he now realized, would soon be getting desperate. After dinner another bright idea. He asked the Baron if he might see him and the Countess alone. Naturally. They received him in the boudoir.

"Please show me the key of the jewel-case at once, will you?"

The Countess produced it. He held it eagerly under the light.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. He turned it over, held it up to the light, and repeated "Ah!" three times. The Countess was very impressed.

"Vell?"

"I can say nothing more to-night. To-morrow I hope to spring a surprise——"

"Vat ees dat?"

"He springs a surprise to-morrow," explained the Baron.

Freddie appeared to be thinking profoundly. He said "Ah!" once more, and left the room without another word.

"This will be difficult to follow up," he thought, as he went downstairs, not having the faintest idea what his various "Ahs!" implied.

He found Olga in the drawing-room with the rest of the party. She was in a high-spirited, ragging mood. He could not detach her from the rest. Her mocking laughter jarred him. He did not understand her. She was never serious for a moment. It was the first time he had met a girl of this kind. He was bewitched by her, and at the same time she made him feel wretched. Before the others she went out of her way to make him look a fool. And yet on the river——

He retired early and lay in bed trying to evolve "depositions." If only the Countess didn't keep on demanding clues! Clues! What were clues? In the stories he had read they were usually footprints, or hair-pins, or tobacco pouches. In any case, something solid. On the morrow he simply *must* find a clue. It would be his last chance. He slept at last, dreaming of the perfume of dark hair and of some very expensive and mysterious scent.

The next day was finer than ever. A thin mist hung over everything, presaging heat to come. After breakfast the Countess sent for him as usual. He experienced the familiar sensation of the schoolboy being hauled up before the head master for not learning his prep.

"Vell?"

How sick he was of it!

"To-day I expect to find a clue," he said.

"He expects to find a clue," echoed the Baron.

The Countess was looking annoyed and a little suspicious.

"To-morrow they go," she snapped.

"You may rely upon me, Countess," wheedled Mr. Freddie, his mind concentrated on a last day on the river.

But Olga didn't want to go on the river. She took him for a walk over a common. He was deliriously happy. Away from the others she was quite amenable and rather more than friendly. She did not object to his squeezing her hand, putting his arm round her waist, and on two occasions kissing her. Beyond that there seemed to be a kind of blank wall. He could not think of the right thing to say. She never attempted to talk to him seriously. She was amusing herself with him.

It took Freddie the whole morning to realize this, and when he did he felt desperate. He was madly in love with her, and she was as intangible as a myth.

LUNCH was a dismal meal. He almost made up his mind to confess to the Countess and to return to town forthwith. But the lunch was a very excellent lunch, and afterwards he felt fortified. He strolled out into the rose-garden, sat on a bench in the sun, and smoked. It seemed a shame to have to leave all this. That wretched Countess with her clues! He simply must find something.

He held the key up to the light and repeated "Ah!" three times. The Countess was very impressed.

Suddenly he saw her coming in his direction through the pergola. He looked desperately around. The only solid thing that caught his eye was a small garden trowel. He stooped and picked it up. As she approached him, he went up to her and handed her the trowel.

"Look, Countess," he said. "I have found a clue."

And without giving her time to ask questions, he hurried away in the direction of the house. He found Olga near the boathouse.

"Come," he said, "for the last time. Down the river. You must."

She was carried away by his decisiveness, and in a short while they were gliding away down the river. And they had a very pleasant afternoon. Pleasant, in that youth is pleasant, and a sunny day. And dalliance is pleasant under a willow tree with the water lapping the sides of a punt musically. And it is pleasant to hold hands and to imagine that one is in love—if only for an hour. It is pleasant to believe that life is perpetuated in a gesture. To the girl it was a pleasant pastime. To the young man a desperate spiritual adventure. He knew that nothing could come out of it, and he didn't care. He saw himself clear and whole for the first time. During the most intriguing moments of this new ecstasy he was registering a vow to improve himself, to work, to learn, to study. He would go back and begin life anew.

"I love you so much that I am going to give you up," he said.

"Before you talk of giving up, you must first postulate possession," she answered.

He didn't know the meaning of the word "postulate," so he kissed her lips, presumably in order to close them.

He decided to catch the six-fifteen back to town, and so, in spite of her protests, he manfully guided the punt back to Steeplehurst boat-house in time for tea. On arriving at the house, one of the servants told him that the Baron wished to see him in the rose-garden.

"My doom!" he thought. However, he went eagerly enough thither, anxious to get the whole thing over. He saw the Baron in conversation with an old man with white hair. As he entered the garden the Baron exclaimed:—

"Oh, Mr. Oppincott, Count Tisza himself has come over to see us."

The old Count came forward and then started at sight of Freddie.

"But this is not Ponderton!" he said.

"Ponderton?" said the Baron. "Ponderton? Did you not say Pimpleton on ze 'phone?"

"Pimpleton! No, Ponderton. Ponderton, the great detective. Who is this fellow?"

It was an embarrassing position, but it was relieved in a most astonishing manner. The Countess came hurrying down the grass path. Within earshot she cried out:—

"Oh, Mr. Pimpleton! Mr. Pimpleton!"

The three men turned. The Countess came up. In her right hand she held out a pearl necklace.

"Oh, Mr. Pimpleton! how can I zank you?"

"But zis is not Pimpleton," cried the Baron. "I mean it is Pimpleton. It is not Ponderton."

"Who vas Ponderton?"

"It should be Ponderton, but it is Pimpleton."

"I know nozing. But I know it is he who find ze necklace. Listen, you all. I know not how Mr. Pimpleton or Mr. Ponderton work, on vat lines, no. But he zink, and zink, and zink, for two days. He not poke about like zis Battesley. He keep quiet and hide. And then, lo! presto! he find ze clue quick."

"How do you mean?" exclaimed the Baron.

"Listen. Zis afternoon I find him here zinking in zis garden. I goes to him. He gives me a little—vat you call?—trowel! garden trowel. He says, 'Look, here, ze clue!' Zen he go away. I hold ze trowel in my hand and I zink also. And suddenly it all come back to me. It was here in zis garden on ze Saturday ven ze pearls was stolen. I had put my chatelaine down on ze zeat here, so! Zey call to me to go to ze telephone. Ven I gom back, I zee zat man, Ben Burnett, ze unter-gartener. He vas vorking quite near in ze beds. I zink he give me one funny look, but I take no notice. Ze chatelaine vas as it is. So! I zink no more about zis until just so soon. Ven I zee ze trowel it all gom back. I suspicion him with certainty. I go right down quick to his cottage. I go in. He is there vis his wife. I accuse him. I say 'Vere is ze necklace you vas taken?' He says no, but his wife burst vif tears. Zen I know. He too quite vite he goes. He bends ze knee. He tells all. He vas vat you say, a tickets-of-leave man. He vas a bad man. But he lives straight, vasn't it? He implores forgiveness. His wife cries. She will ruin herself if he is taken. I give vay. I am veak. I restore me the necklace. I fogive him. I am so happy. Oh, Mr. Pondleton, how can I zank you?"

"I only did my duty," said Freddie, quickly.

"You will stay mit us over ze week-end, shust as a guest? Yes?"

"Alas, no," answered Freddie. "I must catch the six-fifteen. I have another urgent case."

"Vell, vell!" cried the Baron. "I must

As she approached, he handed her the trowel. "Look, Countess," he said. "I have found a clue."

congratulate you, Mr. Pinderton. Perhaps I was fortunate after all to make zis mistake on ze telephone, eh, Count ? "

The Count was annoyed, but he shrugged his shoulders and bowed politely to Freddie.

He did not see Olga again. Close by the box-hedge near the summer-house he heard her laughter and her merry voice calling out "Fifteen-forty ! " She was playing a single with the curate.

" It's a rum, funny life," he thought, as he sat back in the corner of a first-class carriage going back to London. In his breast-pocket was a cheque for one hundred pounds.

ALL this happened three years ago. It seems strange that after his brilliant start in the career of a private detective he no longer follows that calling. Indeed, he never received another commis ion.

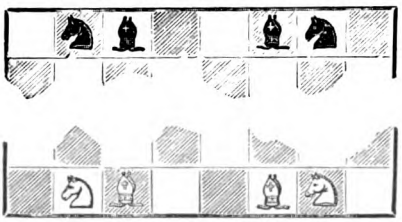
He is now running a little shop where he sells foreign postage stamps, and is doing fairly well. He is married to a little girl, the daughter of an ironmonger. She is not clever, nor even pretty, but she has redeeming qualities. One is that she adores Freddie. She thinks he is handsome, loyal, and clever. She is enormously proud of him, and she believes in his story about the recovery of the Countess's pearls. Perhaps that is because he told her the truth about it. He also told the truth about it to John and Emma and Jane, but so embellished was it with romantic tissues that the Father of Lies himself might almost have claimed it as his own. What would you ? A man must defend himself.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

685.—CHANGING PLACES.

PLACE the knights and bishops in their proper places, as shown in the diagram. The puzzle is to move one piece at a time, white and black alternately,



so that the two colours shall change places, without any piece ever attacking, or being attacked by, another piece of the opposite colour. That is, they change sides of the board. Note that the destination of each bishop is fixed, because it must keep on the same coloured square, but a knight can cross over to either the king's or the queen's side, as you wish. It must be done in fifteen moves for both sides. It is quite easy in sixteen, but how is it possible to save a move?

686.—PALINDROMIC SENTENCES.

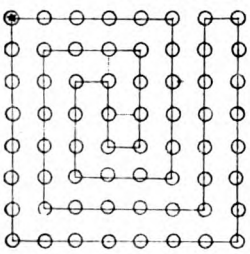
IN the old days, a powerful charm against evil was the palindromic sentence, which reads the same backwards as forwards. Probably the best that was ever composed is "Sator arepo tenet opera rotas," which is not only palindromic but forms a perfect word square when written one word over another. This is found in many of the old books of magical formulas. The Greek poet Sotades was great at this sort of thing, and one of his best-known lines is, "Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor." Some of the cleverest in English are these. "Madam, I'm Adam," "llewd did I live & evil I did dwell" (the "ll" being the ancient way of writing the capital L), and the Napoleonic line, "Able was I ere I saw Elba," which has developed into, "Snug & raw was I ere I saw war & guns." Some of the more lengthy examples, such as "Now, Ned, I am a maiden nun; Ned, I am a maiden won," "Now stop, major-general, are negro jam-pots won," and a new one just sent to me, "Wonders in Italy: Latin is 'red' now," are unnatural and forced. Though short, it would be impossible to beat the following, "Was it a rat I saw?" "Rise to vote, sir," and "Draw, O coward!" Now, as a little exercise, I will invite the reader to form a good palindromic sentence from the following letters: A A A A E E G G I I L N N R R. I will add that there are six words, and, as there is only one L, that letter must obviously be in the middle.

687.—MISSING WORDS.

BEFORE the throne the ..... raised his hood:
The courtiers, losing their ....., all fled.
The monarch for a while the sight withstood,
Then left his ..... and ran off in dread.

The words contain the same seven letters differently arranged.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.



680.—A MOTOR-RIDE PUZZLE.

THE illustration shows a correct solution. All roads are omitted except those used and the two short ones (indicated by dotted lines) that were not available.

681.—THE QUEEN AND THE KNIGHT.

TAKING the upper left-hand quarter of the board, as in A and B, the ten numbered squares are the only distinctive ones. Thus the upper numbers represent the number of times a particular square is to be found on the board by reversal and reflection.

A (Queen)

4 21	8 21	8 21	8 21
	4 23	8 23	8 23
		4 25	8 25
			4 27

B (Knight)

4 2	8 3	8 4	8 4
	4 4	8 6	8 6
		4 8	8 8
			4 8

The lower numbers show the number of squares that a queen (A) or knight (B) so located will attack. Multiply these pairs and add together. The result is 1,456 in case A and 336 in case B. But two pieces can be placed on the board in 4,032 different ways = 64 × 63. Therefore, the chances of the queen attacking the knight are $\frac{1456}{4032}$ or $\frac{13}{36}$, and those of the knight attacking the queen $\frac{336}{4032}$ or $\frac{1}{12}$. Add these fractions and we get $\frac{4}{9}$, so that the odds that one piece will attack the other are 4 to 5 in favour, or 5 to 4 against.

682.—A COMMON DIVISOR.

SINCE the numbers have a common factor plus the same remainder, if the numbers are subtracted from one another in the manner shown below the results must contain the common factor without the remainder.

508,811	723,217
480,608	508,811
28,203	214,406

Here the prime factors of 28,203 are 3, 7, 17, 79, and those of 214,406 are 2, 23, 59, 79. And the only factor common to both is 79. Therefore the required divisor is 79 and the common remainder will be found to be 51. Simple, is it not?

683.—A CHARADE.

THE word is MAT-TRESS.

684.—A DIGITAL DIFFICULTY.

THE solution to this is held over for the reasons stated last month.

REX MAGNUS

by

HAROLD STEEVENS

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"DEAREST OLD THING,—It's no use. I've done all I know how, but it seems that nobody wants me in this dear old country. If I've put in for one job I've put in for a hundred. Same story everywhere—nothing doing. So I've decided that as I can't get on I must get out P.D.Q. before I'm absolutely broke.

"Now, sweetheart, you know how I love you and always will—there'll never be any other girl for me. But I'm not going to leave you pledged to a pauper on the other side of the world. That wouldn't be cricket, now would it? Of course, I'm going to make good sooner or later, but meanwhile you might meet somebody—oh, hang it, I can't explain it on paper. So I'm coming down to see you the day after to-morrow, may I? We'll take our rations out into the Beeches and have a jolly picnic like we had behind Albert—you remember—shall we? Do, just to please, for the last time,

"Your sobbing
"BOY."

Two tear globules hung poised in Marian Asterley's dark blue eyes, like stars in a twilight sky. So this was the end of it! Remember that picnic behind Albert? Would she ever forget it? They planned it together—how young and care-free they were in those far-off days of toil and peril! She got leave to use the car she was driving, and picked him up in a quiet lane outside the town. Then they ran out through the smiling French countryside to the woods above the Somme.

There in a peaceful upland glade he unloaded his haversack and spread the feast on a green turf bank. They built a fire of sticks and boiled tea-water from a streamlet—laughing, chatting, singing, forgetting all horrible things, while the groaning of the distant guns made an unheeded diapason to the melody of their hearts. Not a soul came near them all that livelong afternoon.

But the hours passed like the flash of a smile, and as the sun dropped down over Amiens he came and took her hands in his without a word. With never a word they pledged their hearts, signing the contract with their eyes alone. Then he dropped her hands and caught her in his arms and kissed her—oh, more than once—and she kissed him.

After a time they remembered that they were on the earth after all, broke away from each other with sudden accord, and burst out laughing.

"That's that!" said the man, finding his tongue at last and shaking himself. "Girlie, if we come out of this alive, we'll never part again. Are you on?"

"Done with you, boy!"

They shook hands on it like men and bolted for the car, sailing back to quarters in a glory of afterglow and bliss.

The fortune of war swept Hugh Greatrex down the line away from her, and just before the curtain dropped he was badly smashed and sent off home with the sure prospect of an M.C. and Croix de Guerre, a long spell in hospital, and a gammy leg at the end of it. By the time he got out, all the good jobs were snapped up, the trade slump came along, and nobody wanted anybody—certainly not a fellow with an interrupted education and a doubtful limb. His gratuity dribbled away, his pension was nothing to live on; nevertheless he hung on, showing a cheerful front and hoping for better things, except when the black horrors of despondency came down upon him in the lonely night.

It was a wretched time, and but for Marian he could never have endured it. She divined, of course, the sufferings of the man she loved, and never failed, whether in her letters or on the rare occasions when

they met, to replenish his hopes and revive his flagging self-confidence, never breathing failure but assuming always that success for him was sure.

So he stuck it out while his funds sank lower and lower, until one day in a mood of bitter frankness he forced himself to face the truth, and saw that the time had come and could no longer be put off when he must make a move, though it should break his heart to do it, or sink for ever.

HE swung round the bend of the road at a great pace and picked her out at once, though she was half a mile away; there was something about her shape or carriage that he could never mistake. When he came up she was waiting for him by the roadside, half sitting, half standing with her back against a tree, and she had on her old weather-stained Army rig—the very same that she had worn on that famous afternoon in the woods above the Somme.

The sharp three-mile walk from the station in the clean woodland air had stirred his blood and raised his spirits in spite of himself. Furthermore, the prospect of seeing her made him joyful always, so that he had almost forgotten the melancholy purport of their meeting.

"Good old boy!" she called, as he came up striding, with the pathetic little limp that always brought a lump to her throat, though he himself made only a joke of it. "You've lost no time, my lad."

"I'll tell you how it was," he answered gravely. "The engine-driver got word that the best and beautifullest girl in the world was waiting up the road and he put on double extra steam. Come on!"

She flushed with pleasure at his compliment, laughing that gay-hearted laugh which it was his triumph to evoke and rhapsody to hear. He seized her hand and they scrambled up the bank into the wood; a dozen paces, and they were swallowed up in the crowding leafage of the Beeches.

By mutual impulse they stopped. She swung round in front of him, took his face in her hands, and pressed her lips to his.

"You dear silly," she said. "I'll wait for you for ever, of course."

His arms closed round her, crushing her to him; he kissed her cheeks, her brows, her lips. Tears stood in his eyes; he could not trust himself to speak, so presently he took her hand again and they marched on together as before.

"Nice old fellow! We're going to have a lovely day, aren't we?" she burst out, to cheer him up and brush away the sentimental cobwebs. "Why, you've got some of your old togs on too!" She laughed merrily. "What a pair of idiots we are! There's the patch on your old field-boots, where Jerry's shell-splinter knocked out five francs' worth of leather!"

"And there's the stain you got on your skirt when you hoisted that little Hussar into the car at Damnation Corner."

He took the skirt between his fingers, handling it reverently like a sacred relic.

"It won't come out—I've tried everything."

"Let it stay. I love that skirt; it's just like a piece of you."

"Where are we going?" she cried, hastily changing the subject. "It's pretty easy to get lost here, boy, if you don't know the lie of the land."

"Know it!" he laughed. "Why, I was born here. Spent half my infant years playing truant in these Beeches. I ought to know them."

"Where did you live?"

"Just along the turnpike road there."

"Which house?"

"King's Beeches."

"What! that great place standing back in its grounds, with the lime-tree avenue, the dancing dryad, and the lovely old ironwork gates with the Latin motto on top?"

"That's it. *Magnus rex pro magno rege.*"

"Which signifieth?"

"Greatrex for the great king—sort of play on the words, you know. And the coat of arms is there, too—crossed swords supporting a crown."

"Your father must have been very rich to live there?"

"Oh, no, he wasn't; he had to give it up because he was so poor—he was a soldier. My great-grandfather was the last of the rich ones."

"Why, how long did your family live there, then?"

"About five centuries on and off. It used to be confiscated now and again. We had a break under the Tudors. Then Old Noll turned us out, and Charles put us back. We got in another mess over the Jacobite business, but half a century later on old fighting Hubert made a pile of money in Clive's Indian wars and bought it back again. The Greatrex land used to run into four counties."

"You never told me this."

"Why should I, girlie? It's finished. Greatrex is gone and Sinberg the financier reigns in his stead."

"I've seen him—ugly as sin—absolute vermin. What a pity! But how did it happen?"

"Well, great-grandfather was an ensign at Waterloo, and when Boney got knocked out and the wars came to an end he had no proper outlet for his energies. So he

took up with a sort of socialism, or whatever they used to call it then."

"Poor fellow!"

"Yes; he got the idea into his head that we owned too much land—perhaps he was right, though the farmers never thought so. Anyhow, he insisted on selling them their farms; he wasn't worrying much about the price so long as the tenants bought. There was a big sale—thousands and thousands of acres—and late at night he trundled back to King's Beeches in his chariot with something like thirty thousand golden guineas under the front seat. I've got the record somewhere, in his own handwriting."

"Well, what did he do with the money?"

"He locked it up in a cupboard, intending to drive up to the City in the morning and leave it with his banker. He had a benevolent idea of buying vacant land on the outskirts of the town and developing it as a sort of garden city for the masses. By Jingo, if he had done that we should have been millionaires to-day!"

"Well, didn't he? And if not, why not?"

"The money was stolen—every stiver of it, and all the best of the family plate and a good few jewels with it. Four rascals followed him home from the county town, crept into the back premises—it was all reconstructed afterwards quite in the modern style—and lay doggo till all was quiet. Then they came out, broke open the press, and pouched the gold, cleared the sideboard and a glass case full of heirloom jewels, let themselves out of the house, and made off."

"Weren't they ever caught?"

"Yes. The stable-dog gave tongue—they hadn't reckoned on that, which showed they were strangers to the neighbourhood, because the Greatrexes were always strong on dogs. Great-grandfather jumped out of bed, grabbed his old Brown Bess, and let fly at them as they ran across the lawn. The last man dropped; the other three ran back, tore his coat from his back—there was stuff in the pockets, no doubt—and left him lying helpless with a smashed thigh-bone."

"Brutes!"

"Of course they made for the Beeches—splendid cover—must have been wilder still in those days. But the old man was after them like a shot, just as he was, in nightcap and shirt, yelling like fury for butler, footman, forester, coachman, groom, gardener, and scullery boy. Hullo, girlie, we're going to catch it! There's a storm coming up if I'm not mistaken."

Hugh was staring up through the beautiful dappled dome of beech branches; the sky was darkening fast.

"Yah, confound you!" he shouted, shaking a big raindrop out of his eye. "Come under here, little one. It's raining cupfuls already."

"Oh, bother! Just when we were getting to the most exciting part."

"To be continued in our next!" Hugh pronounced, sententiously.

"Go on with it at once."

"Let me see, where did we get to? Oh, yes, the scullery boy was scudding o'er the mead."

"Oh, dry up, Masefield!"

"I wish I could. There, come a little closer; it's perfectly justifiable—suppose the raindrops spoilt your nice new costume?"

SHE let him draw her close in under a mighty tree, his arm fast clasped round the waist of her weather-stained frock and their backs against the smooth grey trunk. Above their heads the bole of the tree, gigantic and grotesque, jutted out like a portico, protecting them perfectly from the rain.

"A forest king!" said Hugh, respectfully, bending back his head and looking upwards. "Isn't he a splendid creature? And old! Lord, what history must have rattled round his hoary head, if he could only tell it!"

"As old as the Greatrexes?"

"Older. Some of these fellows go back to the Plantagenets; we only came up with Harry the Fifth. Well, as I was saying, the scullery boy and all the rest of the male establishment dashed out after the thieves, shouting and blazing away with pistol and blunderbuss, while the servant girls screamed and screeched from the bedroom windows. Half-a-dozen dogs, mastiff and bloodhound and my great-grandmother's King Charles, with other canine odds and ends in between—oh, I've heard the tale a hundred times—came tearing along behind, barking at the pitch of their respective voices."

"What a lovely hullabaloo, all in the silent night!"

"You're right. No wonder the thieves were rattled. They had got away with stuff heavy enough for ten and now there were only three of them to carry it. No doubt they heard the bloodhound too, and that wouldn't ease their feelings any. They made a pretty poor show of it."

"How were they caught?"

"The forester plugged one of them just inside the Beeches. The bloodhound ran down another an hour after sunrise, and three days later the last one was nabbed after tendering a guinea for bread and ale at a tavern in the town. Hullo! that's thunder—listen!"

"It's miles away. Then great-grandfather got his money back after all?"

She let him draw her close in under a mighty tree, his arm fast clasped round her waist.

"No, he didn't. That's the curious part of it. Except for a handful of guineas in the man's pockets they never found the money, nor the plate or jewels either."

"But the thieves must have known what they did with it?"

"No doubt; but they wouldn't peach, and great-grandfather wouldn't have them put to the torture, or whatever the equivalent of it was in those days. They were transported to the Antipodes, of course, but whether they had dumped the stuff in the forest somewhere, intending to come back for it at a more convenient season, or whether they had managed to pass it on to confederates who shoved it in the melting-pot, nobody ever discovered."

"We'll search for it now, right away, as soon as this storm blows over."

Hugh burst out laughing. "Why, that's just what the whole countryside was doing when George the Fourth was king. Digging for the King's Beech treasure was the local pastime for a generation."

"Did they never find anything?"

"I don't know—if they did we never saw it. And the family never recovered, financially speaking. Great-grandfather lost heart, not so much on account of the money as because he thought that a prominent advocate of the brotherhood of man, like himself, ought to have been better treated by the proletariat. He let things slide. Then grandfather was killed in the Mutiny before he had time to pull the property round, and agricultural depression settled my poor old dad. The mortgagees stepped in at the last and mopped up practically everything."

"Poor old Hugh—there wasn't any chance for you!"

His arm tightened round her. "I'll make one, though; the Greatrexes don't go down like that. I say, girlie, we must get away from the trees. The storm's coming right over us."

A flash of lightning lit up the wood, followed a few seconds later by a grinding peal of thunder.

"Sounds like the angels' tea-tray crashing down the heavenly stairs, doesn't it? Come along—quick!"

He unstrapped his old oil-silk groundsheet, flung it round her shoulders, and led her out into the open, where the rain was pouring down in frantic haste to get out of such an uncomfortable sky.

"Here, we'll grovel in this ditch. I don't want to carry a dear little cinder home to her sorrowing friends."

"All right, Captain; don't mind my uniform. I shall love to spend next week cleaning up."

Hugh grinned and helped her to slither down the sloppy bank until only their heads were above ground level; he put his arm round her shoulders and his lips to her ear.

"There are lots of uniforms but only one Marian!" He almost had to shout to make her hear through the seethe of the rain. "We're a bit too near the old boy still, but it's the best we can do at the moment."

"Great old thing! He doesn't care a bit—he's seen hundreds of rackets like this. Steady as a rock, isn't he?" She gazed up admiringly at the monarch beech-tree which seemed, from where they crouched, to tower proud and fearless into the very midst of the lowering thunder-clouds.

A blinding, lingering, quivering flash turned all the wood to sheeted flame; a molten crown of blue-white fire alighted on the head of the forest king; and instantly the fabric of the heavens seemed to split and rend above their heads with frightful detonation.

Instinctively Hugh drew her down against his shoulder to shield her from the menacing din. It was well he did so; well also that the habit of facing danger open-eyed still clung to him.

For, as he looked, the veteran of a thousand storms—his great heart burst at last—opened out from top to bottom with a riving shriek; and while one vast semicircle of the trunk stood fast, the other half swayed outwards, leaning on the helpless air—hung poised, gathered momentum——

HUGH had just time to yell the alarm, "Down, Marian! He's coming right on top of us!" and to thrust her unceremoniously to the bottom of the ditch, when the tons'-weight mass of timber fell crashing to the ground. The soil of the forest trembled.

A stunning blow on the back of his head sent Hugh sprawling, with his neck wellnigh dislocated and his face flat in the muddy bed of the ditch.

He wriggled convulsively, then lay still. And so he might have stayed till Judgment Day had not Marian, sopping but uninjured, promptly realized his danger. So cramped under the mass of branches that she could hardly move, she nevertheless managed to heave at him until she got him over on his side. Then with her small handkerchief she wiped the clammy mud from his mouth and nostrils, and soon, to her joy, saw him make a wry grimace and put up his hand to brush away whatever was worrying him.

In another moment he opened his eyes. "Why, Marian dear, where on earth have we got to?"

"Not on it at all, old boy—underneath it

—still in the ditch, and the best place for us."

"Looks like a sort of cage we're in."

"Those are the branches. One of them nearly knocked my Hughie out for good!"

He stopped, felt for her hand, and held it to his lips.

"Come, boy—you must get me out of this."

It was not easy. A dense network of

Crouching and crawling through this tunnel last into the

"Ah, the old king wouldn't do that—not to his own people. It gave my girl a bit of a fright, though, did it?"

"Just a little bit."

He thought for a moment. "By Jingo! I got my face in that muddy stuff, didn't I? I remember now: I couldn't breathe and I couldn't lift my head. I thought I was finished."

"Oh, no, you weren't!"

"Marian," he said, severely, searching her face with penetrating gaze—she was still panting a little from her exertions—"if you hadn't——"

twisted and broken branches and leafy twigs lay across the ditch like the lid on a hamper, while here and there a bough, such as that which had struck down Hugh, dipped into it, taut as a bended bow under the pressure of the mass.

Crouching and crawling through this tunnel of mud and verdure, they emerged at last into the light of day, soaked and miry from head to foot but delighted to find that the rain had ceased, the thunderstorm

of mud and verdure, they emerged at light of day.

gone booming off to northward, leaving the sky swept clean and azure-bright, save for mounting cloud-billows of flawless white.

Their spirits came back with a bound. They looked each other up and down, and the dripping beech-wood rang with their laughter. They were indeed a deplorable pair.

"There's a spot of mud on this man's heels!" cried Marian, in a tone of pained indignation. "Take his name, sergeant-major!"

"Have you no clothes-brush in your kit, Driver Asterley? In that case, may I suggest the village pump?"

"Brute!"

"Now we must go and drop a tear over the old hero's bones," said Hugh, when they had sobered down a little. "And then we'll blow up 'Rations.' I'm fair clemmed, as the Lincolns used to say. By Jiminy!' he exclaimed, as they came up to the scene of the disaster. "That was a narrow squeak—missed us by a hair!"

The huge, hollow side of the shattered beech trunk lay prone on the sward like the shell of some old wrecked vessel on a stormy shore, and the enormous projecting bole, scorched with fire and rugged as a Chinese carving, was embedded in the soft ground on the very lip of the ditch.

"Lucky we only got the branches on top of us, Marian. If that bit of crusted antiquity had gone a few inches farther and pitched into the ditch, we'd have been ground to powder."

"Don't, boy—I can't bear to think of it. Come away and see what's left of the old warrior."

They made a circuit round the prostrate mass and approached the piteous relic of that noble tree.

"'My head is bloody but unbowed,'"

murmured Hugh. "See how the lightning struck his crown and ran down his interior to——"

"Boy!" Marian clutched his arm. "Hugh—what is it? Look! Do you see anything—or am I dreaming?" There was something like awe in her voice.

"Where, darling?"—following the direction of her eyes. She felt his arm stiffen, then relax. He shook his head.

"'Ten travelling tinkers tinkering tenpenny tinder-boxes'!"

"Nonsense! Those can't be old tins."

In the hollow base of the shattered tree, half buried in black mould under an overlying mat of rotting leaves, beech-mast, and twigs, they saw a heap of metal things—goblets and cups, bowls and ladles and salvers, all mixed up with piles and piles of coin-like discs. The things were strewn about just as if somebody had given the heap a furious kick, and most of them were black with dirt or green from long corrosion.

"Stage properties at the best, I'm afraid, my dear," said Hugh, regretfully. "Triumphs of the tinsmith's art! Anyhow, you've found your buried treasure, sweetheart, thanks to Jove his thunderbolt, so you mustn't complain."

"I don't believe you're right, Hughie. I've got a feeling that it's something better than that."

"Well, I'll bet you a jewelled christening mug to a chased punchbowl that it isn't! And now we'll proceed to settle the bet."

He stepped forward, dropped on his knees, and picked up the first thing that came to hand—a sort of vase with a slender foot and a lid. It was of elegant shape and heavily embossed, though the character of the decorations could not be discerned through the crust of grime.

Hugh worked at the lid and got it open without much difficulty: it must have been well fitted originally. So soon as he caught sight of the interior he opened his eyes and whistled.

"What is it?" She was leaning over his shoulder. "Why, it's as bright as gold!"

"Marian, I believe you've won the bet! Nothing else could have stood the weather like that; it's gilt right enough. Oh, I say—hold me up!"

He was examining some marks on the inside of the vase. Suddenly he clapped on the lid and, holding the vase against his chest, dipped his handkerchief in a pool of rainwater and began vigorously washing a small portion of the exterior. For several minutes he washed and rubbed without speaking; then he carefully dried the vase and held it up for Marian to see. The metal was still black, but he had cleaned away the dirt.

Marian knelt down beside him in order to examine it the better, holding the vase towards her with one hand and resting the other on Hugh's shoulder. She looked at it for a moment, then spoke almost in a whisper:—

"'Crossed swords supporting a crown. *Magnus—rex—pro—magno—rege.*' Hughie, I knew it! It's your family plate—and there's your thirty thousand guineas—and you're not poor any more. Oh, I'm so glad!"

She threw her arms round his neck and laid her cheek against his. "You won't have to go away now!"

He held her fast, devouring her face with yearning eyes. "What! and leave the greatest treasure of all? Not likely!"

"But you're a rich man now; perhaps you won't want me any more."

"You precious, beautiful darling! I've been the richest man in the world ever since that day in the woods above the Somme. Do you think I'm going to throw away the gold for the dross? Still," he added, with a twinkle in his eye and the old, care-free ring in his voice which she had not heard for many a month, "the dross will be useful, decidedly. How soon can you be ready?"

Instead of answering, Marian jumped up, stepped over the heap, and pressed her lips against the beech-stump. Then, with her face close to the crumbling timber, she gently said:—

"Bless you, great rex—king of the forest. True to your friends in sunshine and storm, faithful to death—you're real English!"

She came back to Hugh, who was watching her from his knees. Bending down until her soft hair brushed his cheek, she whispered:—

"Faithful and true in sunshine or sorrow—king of my heart!"

READERS OF MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF HIS DARING ESCAPE FROM PRETORIA—WHICH APPEARED IN OUR LAST TWO ISSUES—MAY LIKE TO COMPARE IT WITH THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS ESCAPES ON RECORD.

SENSATIONAL ESCAPES FROM PRISON

by

CHARLES KINGSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

DURING the last fifty years there have been surprisingly few successful escapes from prison. Scores of convicts have managed to break out of jail, but in nearly every case either their own folly or the efficiency of the staff has resulted in speedy recapture. In this respect the prison service of Great Britain has a wonderful record despite occasional lapses into dishonesty by warders.

Of the two most sensational escapes by prisoners in the present century one is credited to American crooks and the other to a desperate Irish criminal. Perhaps the feat of Pallister and Rohlf was the most remarkable because they were very closely guarded, and the governor of Sing Sing and the staff were anxious that these very brutal murderers should go to the electric chair. Pallister and Rohlf had killed an inoffensive farmer in a lonely neighbourhood, and their arrest was due more to luck than skill, but once they were under lock and key the authorities put into motion the machinery of the law and eventually left them without hope in this world. All their appeals against sentence of death were dismissed, and the day came when Pallister—his partner, a German, was so prostrated by approaching death that he was scarcely conscious—realized that he must try to break the prison bounds.

It was an apparently hopeless ambition, because every warder in the jail was a personal enemy of the murderers owing to the savagery of their crime. Pallister could not, therefore, enlist the sympathies of any of his jailers, and circumstances forced him to seek the co-operation of three other convicts, who readily agreed to take advantage of the path to freedom he promised to find shortly before the date fixed for his execution, but he never kept his promise to them.

When the night came which was to witness Pallister's desperate attempt to save his neck the grim prison-house was as silent as a grave, save when the heavily-armed warders on duty near the cells of the condemned moved or coughed. Pallister, a clever man, who had the Napoleonic gift of being able to command sleep at any time, awoke at ten o'clock and dressed under his blanket. For some days he had been pretending to be weak, physically and mentally, and now, when he called in a thin voice, the warder promptly came to the spy-hole in the door and asked what he wanted. The murderer, who was within a few hours of the electric chair, informed him that he had a terrible pain in his stomach and that he must have a glass of hot milk or he would collapse.

The warder called to a colleague who was on guard at the door at the end of the corridor, and the latter brought the desired hot drink, but when he entered the cell Pallister instantly gripped him by the throat and, because of his extraordinary strength and dexterity, had no difficulty whatever in trussing him up. Having taken the warder's keys, Pallister released Rohlf and they crept down upon the warder near the outer door and quickly rendered him helpless. As they were in possession of the keys Rohlf wished to leave the prison by the ordinary route, but Pallister, knowing that there were twenty warders near at hand ready to

galvanize into action at a moment's notice, insisted on climbing through the skylight and on to the roof of the great silent building. From there they dropped more than twenty feet, Pallister escaping unhurt, but Rohlf severely injuring his left arm.

It was in their favour that Pallister knew every square yard of the country for miles around, and because of this knowledge he was able to guide his companion to the Hudson River by the shortest route and cross to New York. By the time the Sing Sing officials were scouring the country for them the escaped convicts were concealed in the house of an old criminal who had stolen sufficient cash to enable him to turn saloon-keeper. The latter was in the power of Pallister, who was the only man who knew that he was the murderer of an old woman whose body had been found in a New York slum two years previously. Sullivan devoted himself to the task of concealing the two men for whom every policeman in the United States was searching. It was Sullivan who decked out Rohlf in a shabby suit of clothes and provided him with the stock-in-trade of a street pedlar and five pounds. Thus disguised the German started on his travels, and when Pallister next heard from him Rohlf wrote from Brazil.

The American papers let themselves go on the amazing escape of the two murderers, and for weeks photographs of Pallister and Rohlf were reproduced on nearly every front page. Rewards were offered, and every detective tried his hardest, encouraged by the knowledge that success would mean instant promotion. Pallister, however, had only one narrow escape of being discovered. He was too wary to run risks, and it was only because Sullivan's reputation was so bad that the police raided his saloon, and not because they had any special information connecting him with the surprising immunity of the escaped convicts. Pallister was lying on a bed in a garret in the top of the building when Sullivan dashed in with the startling news that the police were on their way, and they were actually in the saloon when the owner of it came down again and vigorously protested against the "outrage and insult" while the leader of the detectives explained his object. Sullivan's tactics were designed to give his friend a chance to reach the cellar, and they succeeded, for when the officers scattered themselves over the building there was no sign of the convict. Having assured themselves that Pallister was not in any of the rooms they went to the cellar, where they first moved every empty barrel and then tested the remainder by putting their hands in to make sure they contained liquid. After tapping the walls and floors for trap-doors they retired, and their footfalls were still distinct when the murderer stepped out of a barrel and shook himself like a wet dog. He had concealed himself in a barrel three-quarters full, and when the detective had peered at it Pallister's head had been completely submerged. The rogue was fond of beer, but this experience convinced him that New York was too dangerous to permit of a prolonged stay, and a week later he was in Mexico, with the large sum of money he had blackmailed Sullivan out of, and, like Rohlf, he was never heard of again.

THE prison escape which I have already described as comparable to the achievement of the two American murderers was that of James Lynchehaun from Maryborough Jail in 1902. Since that date rumour has been busy with his personality and exploits, and if only half of the latter are true he must be a superman. Yet it is not easy to think of him as a hero because the crime for which he was sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude was as cowardly as it was revolting. A powerfully-built man of ungovernable temper, he cruelly assaulted the lady in whose service he was as bailiff, and, not content with nearly battering her to death, he threw her into a building which he set on fire.

This was not his first venture in crime. On a previous occasion when arrested he escaped and was brought to trial because he allowed a friend to earn a hundred pounds reward by handing him over to the police. It was the recollection of this incident which caused the police to adopt special precautions to retain him in custody, and he was removed to Maryborough after his sentence because it was considered the strongest prison in Ireland. But in their anxiety to lessen his chances of escape they dispatched him to the prison before it was quite finished, and thus they unwittingly played into his hands.

At that time Maryborough was regarded as a model prison. All the latest methods and improvements had been introduced and every labour-saving device employed. Thus, whenever the door of Lynchehaun's cell was properly closed and bolted a white disc in the lock outside indicated the fact. Unless the door was completely bolted the disc did not appear, and, consequently, the warder had merely to glance in the direction of the cell to ascertain if his charge was quite safe.

The convict had once been a schoolmaster, and was extremely intelligent and quick-witted. From the very first day of his arrival at Maryborough he saw that the real barrier to freedom was the white disc, and he gave it a great deal of attention. It took him some time to hit upon a solution

of a problem which absorbed his thoughts, and he had just done so when the chaplain visited him. Lynchehaun at once asked for a certain book from the prison library, and when it was brought to him no one could be expected to guess that the reason for his selection was that the book in question had unusually wide margins. And all he required to ensure the success of his plan to beat the prison authorities for the second

time in his career was a small piece of perfectly white paper.

Shortly before the convicts retired for the night Lynchehaun insisted on seeing the governor, and when his trivial and frivolous complaint was dismissed and he was ordered back to his cell he closed the door with a vicious bang, but as he had already plugged the lock-bolt the automatic spring did not act and so the door remained unbolted. Naturally the white disc failed to show, but the convict had provided a substitute for it in the circlet of white paper taken from the book and had placed it over the real disc.

There was now nothing to prevent him leaving the cell, and when the chief warder had made his inspection and the usual silence enveloped the prison the ex-schoolmaster crept into the corridor and climbed to the roof, through which he had no difficulty in breaking owing to its unfinished condition. He crept along to a convenient pipe, down which he slid into the prison yard, and once there he utilized the planks the workmen had left behind them to climb over the huge black wall, which was the only obstacle between him and liberty.

It was entirely due to the dummy disc that Lynchehaun got completely away. Never in the history of prisons has an escaped convict had such a long start, for it was not until the next morning that the escape was discovered, and by this time Lynchehaun had at least eight hours' start.

He was thus able to visit his wife and secure food, clothing, and money, and, guessing that the police would concentrate on watching the Irish ports from which ships sailed to America, he made for London, and from there secured a passage to New York. Once in America he became more daring, but although he was traced by detectives and the British Government applied for his extradition his surrender was refused, and Lynchehaun went into business and prospered. It is said that he has since more than once revisited the scene of his crime,

Sullivan dashed in with the startling news that the police were on their way.

but there is no proof of this, and it is unlikely that he would risk a return to penal servitude.

GEORGE BLIN, a notorious French criminal, had none of Lynchehaun's personality or cleverness, and yet he succeeded in breaking out of prison more than twenty times. He was, however, an example of the really stupid crook, because he could never take advantage of his luck or make the most of his good fortune. It is impossible, of course, to describe all the methods he employed to hoodwink the warders, and there is only space to deal with one of his successes. This was an ingenious as well as a daring effort, because, before he achieved it, he actually informed the detective who arrested him that when he had regained his liberty he would pay him a visit.

The satirical threat had been quite forgotten by the detective when his house was burgled and he found on the kitchen table a receipt signed by Blin for the money he had stolen.

When the officer wrote to the governor of the prison asking for details of Blin's latest escape he was informed that the convict had feigned illness, and that while in the infirmary he had stolen the doctor's coat and cap, and thus disguised had walked out in the dark, those warders who saw him mistaking him for the assistant governor. But Blin, who in the course of his exciting career kept the Paris police constantly on the move and provided the papers with innumerable sensations, died a miserable death in jail, beaten in the end by the very forces over which he had gained so many triumphs.

IF there was melodrama in Blin's exploits there was genuine comedy in those of Ned Rider, a typical Cockney from the slums of London, who more by accident than design found himself inside an Australian prison with a sentence of seven years to serve. There had been a dispute with a friend over a pretty girl, and the dispute resulting in the knifing of his rival accounts for Rider's predicament.

His unfailing good humour, infectious optimism, and prompt obedience quickly earned for him the goodwill of everybody in the prison. When the governor required a window-cleaner Rider was promptly chosen for that enviable task, and he proved to be the best window-cleaner the jail had ever produced. He worked hard, and apparently never attempted to take advantage of the little extra liberty he enjoyed, and when one evening the warders on duty at the principal exit from the prison saluted the person they took to be the governor's wife, they were too surprised to laugh at their mistake when later they heard that the female garments had concealed the slim figure of Ned Rider.

The plans for his *coup* were simply and effectively carried out. Every time he got the chance while engaged on his window-cleaning duties he stole one or more of Mrs. Price's clothes and concealed them in her house. To have carried anything away with him would have been to ensure detection, for the prison rules were very strict, and Rider, in common with every other convict, was searched thoroughly twice a day. As soon as he had sufficient clothes he dressed himself to resemble Mrs. Price, the wife of the governor, and, aided by a large hat and a heavy veil, he got beyond the precincts of the jail and out of the reach of his late guardians. He was never recaptured, and when he was recognized years afterwards by a former fellow-convict he was a prosperous farmer and the father of a large family. Fortunately for him his old-time acquaintance did not betray him, and so the name of Ned Rider was not reintroduced into the criminal annals of Australia.

I HAVE seen it said that no convict has ever succeeded in escaping from Dartmoor and retaining his liberty, but that is a mistake, because Charles Webster, a professional burglar, cut down a sentence of fourteen years' penal servitude to less than six months by taking French leave of his captors at the historic Devonshire jail. In his way Webster accomplished more than Pallister or Lynchehaun because he had far greater difficulties to encounter and a much more efficient system to overcome.

The burglar had that passion for liberty which animates the most spotless patriot, and it was intensified by a desire to enjoy the luxuries to which he considered his hidden wealth entitled him. Scotland Yard had failed to discover the whereabouts of the proceeds of his most recent burglaries, and they had reason to believe that Webster had nearly eight hundred pounds somewhere in London.

On his arrival at Dartmoor the convict was carefully watched, the Home Secretary having given special instructions to that effect, because it was known Webster contemplated attempting to escape. But the convict behaved as though he had no notion of his disfavour at headquarters. He performed his ordinary duties mechanically, and in the course of a few months the warders ceased to flatter him by watching him as though he were a super-crook. Then

he had the misfortune to injure his leg, and he was removed to the prison infirmary.

This was the first stage in his plan to terminate his stay at Dartmoor. He had been thinking of nothing else since he had donned the suit of the broad arrows, and, being an ingenious and clever rogue, he had decided that he would not make the adventure alone. To do so would be to guarantee that practically every warder would concentrate on hunting him down, and he foresaw that if he had a couple of companions in the breakaway the forces of the enemy would be divided, with obvious advantage to himself. He therefore took into his confidence the two other inmates of the infirmary, Brodrick and Thompson, who were serving long sentences, and who were only too delighted to fall in with his plans.

The three men had innumerable opportunities for talking. Webster had no real interest in their welfare, and he merely intended to use them to cover up his tracks when he got away, but he was an excellent actor, and he had won his confederates' confidence long before he whispered to them that the floor of the infirmary was very flimsy, and that underneath it was the store-room, in which there were ladders which would enable them to surmount the great wall, which was too high to tackle unaided.

There was always a warder in charge of the three men, and it seemed impossible for them to leave the room without his knowing it. The infirmary window was a long way from the ground, and when at meal-times the warder took up a position directly outside the door he had not the slightest reason to anticipate they would outwit him. But the day he re-entered the infirmary after a twenty minutes' patrol of the corridor outside and discovered it unoccupied he could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. It was as though the three men had vanished into thin air, for never once had he taken his eyes off the only exit. He ran to the window and examined it, and saw that it had not been touched. Then he blew his whistle, and half-a-dozen of his colleagues came to his assistance. A few minutes later the puzzle was solved, for under the broad table at which the convicts had had their dinner there was a board which had been recently removed and replaced. By now, of course, the three men had made their way from the store-room to the court-yard of the prison, and they were in open country when the hue and cry started.

Everything worked according to plan—that is, Webster's plan. Brodrick and Thompson had a couple of days' liberty, and then, owing to their stupidity, were recaptured, but their leader was more fortunate. He raided a farmhouse and secured clothes and food, and being a master of disguise he roamed about Plymouth when that town was plastered with posters offering one hundred pounds reward for his arrest. When he had grown a moustache and beard he tramped to Leicester, where he worked as a labourer, and from there he went on to Glasgow, and was a dock-hand for several months. The police, slackening their efforts, expressed the opinion that Webster would take to crime again and find his way into their hands, but he disappointed them, and twenty years after his escape he was earning his living as a newsagent in London, and amongst his customers were several policemen and detectives, his shop being opposite a police-station.

Under the table was a board which had been recently removed.

THE escape of John Jackson from Strangeways Prison, Manchester, forty years ago, turned a petty thief into a murderer, and made him for a month the most-talked-about man in England. Jackson, a plumber with a distaste for work, was sent to Strangeways because of a paltry theft from a shop where he had been employed to effect some repairs. His sentence was only six months' hard labour, and it did not seem worth his while to attempt to escape, but one afternoon, when repairing a pipe in a room on the staff side of the jail, he struck

down with a hammer the warder in charge of him.

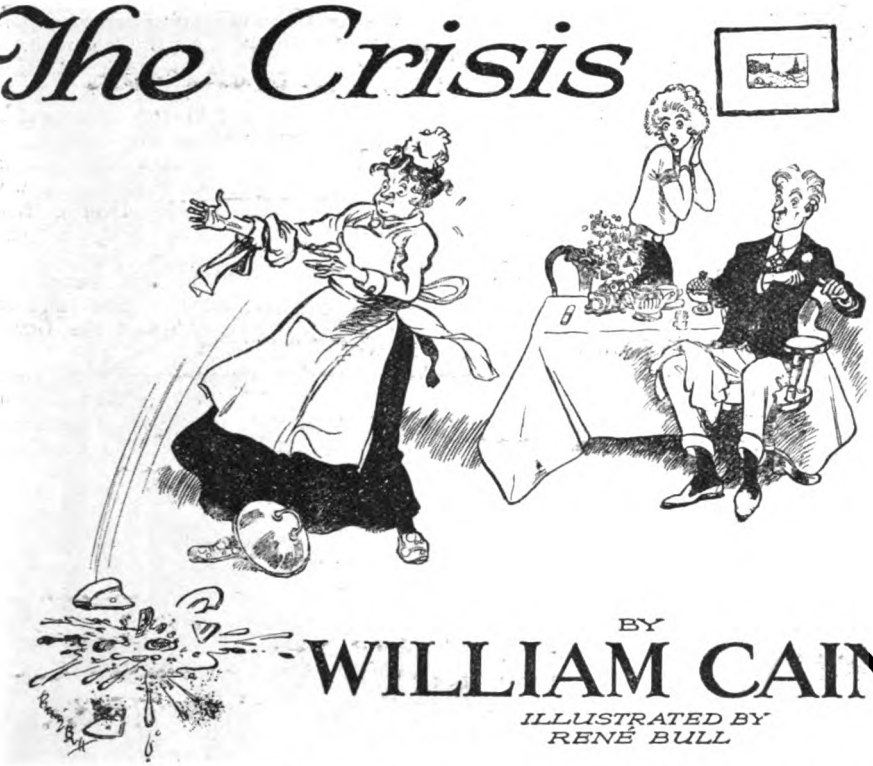
There was an intensely dramatic moment when, just as his victim collapsed, footsteps sounded outside, and the convict had only time to turn the key in the lock when the handle was seized from the outside and a woman's voice was heard asking what was the matter and demanding admission. She was calling for assistance when he climbed out on to the roof and dropped into Southall Street and vanished. It is surprising that in a crowded city like Manchester the grotesquely-garbed convict was not at once captured, but he was fortunate, and when darkness came he stole a suit of clothes from outside a secondhand dealer's shop at the very moment the newsboys were beginning to cry out the murder of Warder Webb at Strangeways Prison.

Greatly to the perturbation of the Mancunians the murderer was still at large at the end of a week. Clues were reported daily and on examination found to be useless, and it seemed as though Jackson was to accomplish the most extraordinary and sensational escape from jail ever known, when he reached Bradford and under the name of Firth took lodgings in a mean street. In less than a month the excitement of the chase died down considerably, but hardship altered his appearance, and soon there was no need for him to remain indoors. One afternoon he went into the streets of Bradford only too conscious of the fact that he had not eaten anything for forty-eight hours, and when he came to a well-stocked grocer's shop he paused to eye the tempting array of edibles which were ranged in the window and in front of the window. Waiting until the assistants were busy serving the throng of customers, he captured a tin of ox-tongue and dashed down the street. This marked the changing of his luck, for his shabby clothes had already attracted the attention of one of the assistants, and a cry of "Stop thief!" led to the solution of the puzzle which had baffled the police and detectives of England for several weeks. When he was taken to the station there was no suspicion that "Firth" was the John Jackson who was wanted for the Strangeways murder, and his real identity would never have become known had not the escaped convict committed the astounding blunder of retaining on his person a pocket-knife which he had taken from the body of his victim.

It happened that the inspector in charge of the station had carefully studied everything connected with that mysterious Manchester crime, and when he saw the knife he recognized it and telegraphed an account of his recognition to the Chief Constable of Manchester. That telegram was as good as Jackson's death warrant, for his trial for the murder of Warder Webb resulted in conviction, and, although there was an extensively-signed petition for reprieve, he was executed.

Waiting until the assistants were busy, he captured a tin of ox-tongue and dashed down the street.

The Crisis



BY

WILLIAM CAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY
RENÉ BULL

ASPIDISTRA raised the dish of eggs and bacon high above her head and dashed it to the floor. "I'm orf," she said.

She turned on her heel and passed out of the breakfast-room, carefully slamming the door behind her. This was the first time in their experience of her that she had closed it. They heard her in the hall shouting for the number of the cab-rank.

"She means it," said Walter. "She's going." He got down on his knees.

"And I only suggested to her," Annette protested, tearfully, "that she had possibly forgotten to heat the water before she filled up the teapot. I don't see how I could have put the thing to her more tactfully."

"No more do I," said Walter, scraping away with the bread-knife. "And there wasn't so much as a hint of harshness in your voice. Don't imagine for a moment that I'm blaming you, darling. And of course we are perfectly entitled to have our tea made with hot water. I don't say boiling. I only say hot. We are indisputably in the right over this. Aspidistra has not behaved at all well. And the sooner she goes," he concluded, sternly, "the better."

Annette thought she had never known him so splendid.

"We shall have to get another," he said. "That's all."

Half an hour later their home was purged of Aspidistra, *plus* two sheets, six towels, a colander, a frying-pan, several boxes of sardines, a Mudie novel, Walter's best mackintosh, Annette's Spanish comb, a plated cruet stand, a tin of boot-polish, a roll of kitchen paper, and an ornament from the drawing-room.

On the whole Aspidistra had been pretty reasonable.

The moment her cab was gone Walter telephoned for another.

"This," he said, "is a crisis and it must be met vigorously. When time is precious, money is dross. Put on your hat, darling."

He demanded the number of Mrs. Grant's Agency. Mrs. Grant gave him the addresses of three thoroughly nice girls whom she knew to be in search of employment.

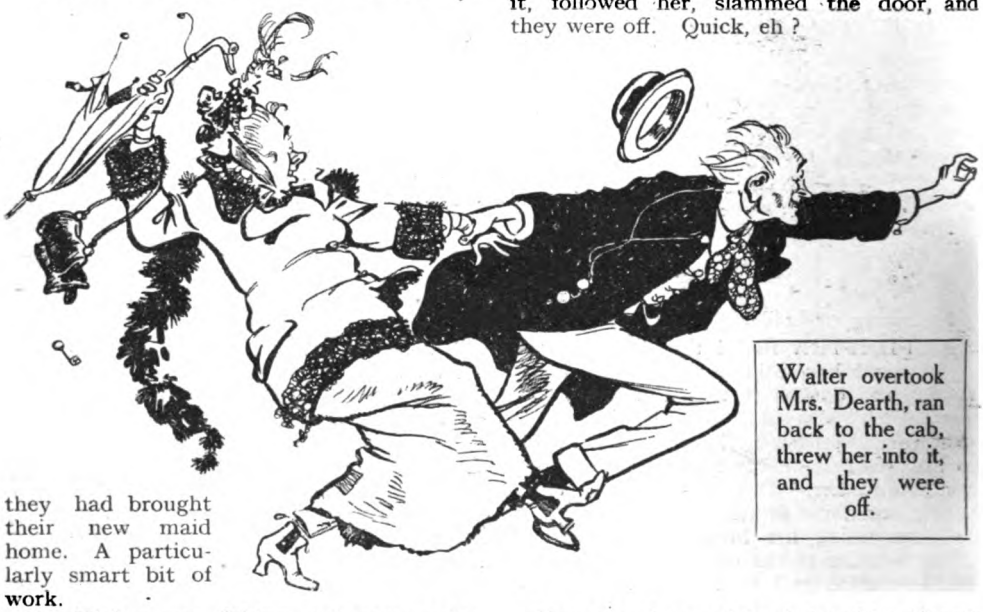
The cab arrived. They bounded into it, drove a mile and a half, and came to the home of Beatrice Tubb, who opened the door to them. They laid their need before Beatrice, who said that she was afraid she couldn't come till to-morrow because she had to collect her unemployment pay that morning, and in the afternoon she was going to Kew Gardens with a gentleman friend.

So they drove another two miles in their cab and came to the home of Laurinda Zowski. Laurinda said that she was very sorry, but she couldn't come for three days because she had the dressmaker in building her a costume and she had to watch practically every stitch the fool sewed.

So they drove another three miles and came to the house of Pearl Owl. Pearl said that she didn't care if she did. Walter said: "I have a cab. We'll take you back with us, shall we?" and Pearl said, "Right-o, sir," and added that she would go and tell her mother to pack her trunk.

When she had left the room they hugged one another. It seemed almost too good to be true.

Another mile and seven furlongs and they had brought their new maid home. A particularly smart bit of work.



Walter overtook Mrs. Dearth, ran back to the cab, threw her into it, and they were off.

As Walter was fishing out some notes wherewith to pay the cab, Annette said, "We've nothing in the house for lunch."

"Eggs," said Walter. "Chops. Plums." He shouted an address and sprang into the cab again. In twenty minutes he was back with the elements of a repast.

Annette met him in the hall to hiss: "She says she's going. Aspidistra has left her room in an awful state. Bed not made. Dust everywhere. And the kitchen's shocking. And the larder. And the scullery. That girl hadn't touched a thing for weeks. But how was I to know? She simply wouldn't have me in her part of the flat. I don't wonder Pearl's going. I don't blame her a bit."

"Char," said Walter. He rushed to the telephone and gave the number of the cab-rank, while Annette went to tell Pearl that they were getting a woman to clean up. Pearl said that in that case she'd think about it.

Walter by now was in touch with Mrs. Grant.

Mrs. Grant gave him the address of a really satisfactory woman who obliged.

The cab arrived. Walter leapt into it from the drawing-room window and was carried to the home of Mrs. Dearth. Mrs. Dearth, he was informed, had just gone round to Mrs. Grant's. He sped to Mrs. Grant's, where he discovered that Mrs. Dearth had that second gone home. "She can't be fifty yards up the street," said Mrs. Grant. "Hat with green bird."

Walter ran up the street, saw the green bird, overtook it, picked up Mrs. Dearth, ran back to the cab, threw Mrs. Dearth into it, followed her, slammed the door, and they were off. Quick, eh?

Very soon he was introducing Mrs. Dearth to Annette, who took Mrs. Dearth to the kitchen, where she found Pearl polishing her finger-nails. As Pearl was good enough to ignore their presence, Annette began to explain to Mrs. Dearth what she was required to do.

Mrs. Dearth said: "Ware's the vacum?"

"The vacum?" Annette repeated.

"That's right," said Mrs. Dearth. "Ware is it?"

"What is it?" Annette asked.

"Dunno wot a vacum is?" cried Mrs. Dearth. "Dunno wot a *vacum* is! She dunno," Mrs. Dearth informed Pearl, "wot a vacum is."

"So I infer," said Pearl, and added over her shoulder to Annette: "She means the electric cleaner, modom."

"But we haven't got one," said Annette.

"'Aven't got one!" cried Mrs. Dearth. "'Aven't got no vacum! Oh, I'm orf!" She picked up her umbrella.

"We'll get one," said Annette. "This moment. My husband will go now. Don't abandon us, Mrs. Dearth. Please don't abandon us."

"Right-o," said Mrs. Dearth. "If I'm to 'ave a vacum, I don't mind staying. But only to oblige."

Annette was already in the dining-room. She found Walter just sitting down to the critical consideration of a novel, which was his dreadful way of earning a livelihood.

"A vacuum cleaner," she said. "Quick. Otherwise your char goes."

Walter sprang out of his chair through the door and landed beside the telephone.

He gave the number of the cab-rank.

Thirteen minutes later he returned with a Wampum.

This was offered to Mrs. Dearth. She looked at it distastefully, and said: "A Wampum, eh? No manner of use Wampums ain't. The Marvel's the only kind *I* care to use. I dunno nothink about these Wampums. Never saw one before in me life. But you take it from me, they're no good. 'Owever, seeing as the thing's 'ere, I'll do what I can with it. But only to oblige, see?"

Walter looked at his watch. "Dear me," he said, "it's past one. What about some food? Those chops, for instance."

"Pearl," said Annette, "don't you think we might have some lunch now?"

"I hope, modom," said Pearl, "you don't expect me to cook anythink with utensils in the state what that girl's left yours in. All the frying-pans is that filthy I wouldn't touch one of them with a barge-pole, and the condition of the saucepans is simply chronic. They turn my stummick, modom. Unless I have clean things to cook with, I can't do nothink. I wouldn't so demean myself."

"Walter," Annette began, but Walter was already giving the number of the cab-rank. While they waited for the cab, Annette wrote down for him, to Pearl's dictation, a list of what was required.

He took it and disappeared.

Pearl, you understand, had accepted the post of cook-general to Walter and Annette. So Annette said: "Don't you think, Pearl, that we might have a look round, while my husband's away, so that I can show you what your parlour work will be?"

Pearl said she didn't mind, laid down her buffer, and got up. They left Mrs. Dearth with the Wampum, and began their tour of inspection.

"This," said Annette, "is the dining-room. My husband does his literary work in here, too."

"What a lot of books, modom!" said Pearl.

"Yes," said Annette. "My husband is very fond of books."

"I'm not," said Pearl. "Who does the dusting of all them, modom? Your 'usband? You?"

"No," said Annette. "You will do that, but, of course, only on the day the room's turned out."

"Oh, will I?" said Pearl. "Not much I won't, modom. What's the good of having a char and a vacuous if she can't do the books?"

"Why," said Annette, "I dare say——"

"And when," Pearl inquired, "is the room turned out? Once a quarter, I suppose, modom?"

"We generally have it done every Thursday," said Annette.

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Pearl. "Well, I've no objection, I'm sure, seeing it's the char'll do it, modom."

"The silver," said Annette, "is in this drawer. We haven't a great deal, you see."

"Who cleans it? You?"

"No," said Annette.

"You don't fancy *I'm* going to, I hope," said Pearl. "*Or* all these brass and copper brights. If there's one thing I don't have no use for it's polishing brights, and you may's well know it, modom."

"Well," said Annette, "I dare say we can leave the polishing to Mrs. Dearth."

"And while you're about it," said Pearl, "you'd better throw in all this shiny furniture, modom. Personally, I don't 'old with rubbing wood."

"This is the drawing-room," said Annette, hastily opening another door.

"My aunt!" said Pearl; "you don't 'arf 'ave a lot of ornaments, do you, modom? Who dusts all these things? You?"

"No," said Annette. "Not as a rule."

"Well," said Pearl, "if I may arsk, what *do* you do, modom? The bedrooms?"

"No," said Annette. "I'm afraid I don't do the bedrooms either."

"Well," said Pearl, "I'm sure I don't mind, modom, so long as the char doesn't. But who washes up the plates? You?"

"The fact is," said Annette, "I don't do anything."

"Well," said Pearl, "you're not like my last lady. She did everything. Of course, modom, I helped with the beds now and then."

Mrs. Dearth manifested herself at Annette's elbow.

"I broke that Wampum," she said. "I tole yer it wasn't any good."

"Oh, dear," said Annette. "How ever did you manage to do that, Mrs. Dearth?"

"Well," said Mrs. Dearth, "I just touched it lightly against the leg of a table, and the 'andle come right in two. So did the leg."

"Which table was it?" Annette inquired.

"The one in the kitching," said Mrs. Dearth. "The one what had all that gold-rimmed dinner china on it."

"That's our new set," said Annette. "It only came last night. I was going to put it away in a cupboard this morning."

"I shouldn't trouble," said Mrs. Dearth. "Lor, what a crash! I wonder you didn't 'ear it. You would 'ave, I expect, only the door was shut. But about that Wampum, mum. I can't do with it, and what I say is—get me a Marvel, or I'm orf."

The front door opened and Walter came in with kitchen utensils disposed all over his person.

"Here you are, darling," he cried. "Nothing forgotten. Absolutely nothing forgotten."

"Mrs. Dearth can't manage that Wampum," said Annette. "She wants a Marvel."

"A Marvel, eh?" said Walter. "Right. I've paid the cab, but I can get another in a minute or two."

Annette removed the parcels from Walter and carried them into the kitchen while Pearl and Mrs. Dearth looked at the pictures in the hall.

When she came back, Walter said: "Don't you think, darling, it would be a good thing if Pearl were to begin cooking our luncheon? I'll be back by the time those chops are done."

"What do you think, Pearl?" Annette asked.

"Why," said Pearl, "I dare say I might, modom. Yes, I don't mind." She drifted in the direction of the kitchen.

"And possibly, Mrs. Dearth," said Annette, "you'd like to clear away all that litter of broken china from the kitchen floor. While you're waiting for your Marvel, you know."

"Right o!" said Mrs. Dearth. "I 'ope I'm not afraid of work."

She followed Pearl.

Walter went down to wait for the cab. I don't know what Annette did.

Walter returned in about half an hour with six different kinds of vacuum cleaners. "I'm afraid," he said, apologetically, to Mrs. Dearth, "that I couldn't get you a Marvel. But perhaps one of these will do?"

"No," said Mrs. Dearth, "they won't. I'm orf."

She put on her hat and went.

"I can do nothing more, darling," said Walter, "till I've had some food. Aren't those chops ready yet?"

"Pearl," Annette called, "aren't those chops ready yet?"

"Yes, modom," roared Pearl from the kitchen, "*and* eaten."

"Eaten?" screamed Walter.

"Certainly," said Pearl, emerging. "You don't expect your employees to go without any food, do you, sir? Mrs. Dearth and I have had our lunch, sir. Naturally, sir."

"But there were eggs," Walter sobbed. "And plums. What about them?"

"Well," said Pearl, "I've got some shells and some stones left, if they're any good to you, sir."

Walter forgot himself. "You devil," he said.

"Thank you, sir," said Pearl. "I'm orf, modom," she added; and went.

NEW STORY BY W.W.JACOBS

MAR 11 191

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

PERIODICAL ROOM
GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIV. OF MICH.

A. CONAN DOYLE
"SAPPER"
P. G. WODEHOUSE

"The shave with the smile in it"

TRADE Gillette MARK
KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

By Appointment to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

"Just listen while we tell you of the only razor we have ever used that creates 'The smile of satisfaction and pleasure.' In our search for the ideal razor we naturally tried the Gillette Safety Razor. What a revelation! What a clean easy trouble-free shave! No stropping, no honing, a few strokes round the chin and the whole job completed in three minutes. No other razor has ever done what the Gillette is doing for us now."

Gillette Safety Razor

TRADE Gillette MARK
KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

NO STROPPING NO HONING

Makes shaving a treat rather than a task.

See the full range of models at Stores, Cutlers, Ironmongers, Chemists, Hairdressers and Jewellers, including the

NEW STANDARD. Triple silver plated New Improved Gillette Safety Razor Metal Box containing 12 double-edge Gillette Blades (24 shaving edges) in Genuine Leather covered Case, purple velvet and satin lined .. .. .. Price **21/-**
Also Gold Plated Price **25/-**

Gillette Blades.

In packets of 12 (24 shaving edges) **4/6**
In packets of 6 (12 shaving edges) **2/3**

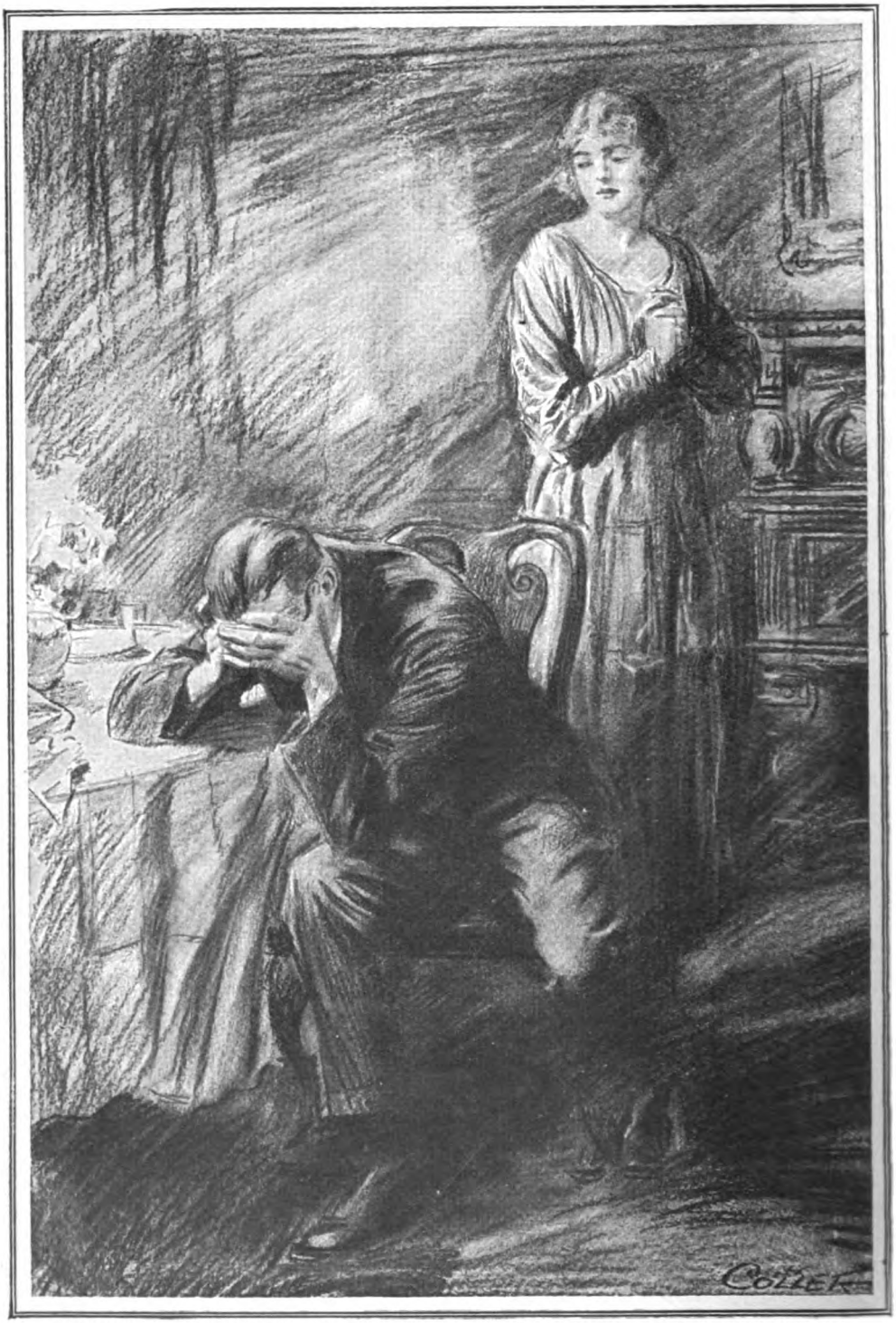
Write for Illustrated Booklet.

GILLETTE SAFETY RAZOR, LTD.
184/188, Gt. Portland Street., London, W.1.

NEW STANDARD. A handsome and efficient outfit. Price **21/-** complete.

FOR LADIES **Every lady will be interested** in the dainty "Milady Decollettee" Gillette 14-ct. gold plated sets admirably adapted to keep the underarm white and smooth. Sold by Gillette dealers, Price **25/-**
Also "Debutante" Set, Gilt Model, price **5/-**

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
March, 1924.



SUDDENLY SOMETHING SNAPPED IN BILL CARRUTHERS' BRAIN. HE BROKE DOWN AND CRIED LIKE A CHILD.

(See page 226.)

THE PORTERHOUSE STEAK

by

"SAPPER"
(H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY HY COLLER

NO one would have noticed him particularly as he walked along Piccadilly. He had on a blue lounge suit; his collar was spotlessly white. And he walked with a curious, slow deliberation which betokened the man in no hurry. In the midst of the hurrying, jostling crowd he was just an inconspicuous unit.

Had anyone working in one of the offices high above the street taken the trouble to follow this particular unit's movements he would have come to the conclusion that he was one of the band of leisured idlers who have nothing better to do than to stroll along the streets when the spirit moves them and look at the shops. More than likely this hard-working spectator would have envied him as he returned to his books and ledgers.

For this inconspicuous unit was undoubtedly a most pronounced shop-looker. Every twenty yards or so he would pause and, leaning a little forward on his stick, stare into a window. Tobacconists, hosiers, Cook's office, all came alike to him; his tastes were evidently catholic. But there was one thing which the watcher from his distant point of observation would have been unable to see: a little thing—and yet such a big one. This idle lounger had a strange method of examining the goods so temptingly displayed. His eyes were tight shut.

For ten or perhaps twenty seconds he would stand there while the midday traffic of London rolled unceasingly by; then, opening his eyes again, he would resume his stroll. Grey eyes they were—steady and indomitable, with a wonderful glint of humour behind them. His face was clean-shaven and good to look at, though to a doctor it might have seemed altogether too thin and fine drawn.

He passed the Piccadilly Hotel, and once more became apparently engrossed in a shop window. This time it was a jeweller's, but the man was quite unaware of the fact. All he was aware of was that the roar of the motor-buses appeared to be coming from a great way off, and that everything seemed strangely unreal. There was a buzzing in his head, as if wheels were spinning round, and his knees felt weak. With an effort he pulled himself together; he'd never fainted in his life before, and it wouldn't do to start now. Somehow or other he'd got to get as far as King Street in Covent Garden.

He walked on, his head thrown back and a faint smile round his lips. As usual there was a block at Piccadilly Circus, and he paused for a moment by an open Rolls-Royce. A girl was driving, and by her side sat a man whose back seemed vaguely familiar. And it was just as he got abreast of the man that someone jostled him, and he stumbled and nearly fell. He lurched up against the side of the car, but recovered himself at once with a word of apology, only to see the man lean forward with a positive shout of joy.

"Bill Carruthers, by all that's holy! Bill—you old blighter, how are you? My sister Joyce."

Copyright, 1924, by H. C. McNeile.

The man on the pavement took off his hat, and the girl looked at him with a friendly smile.

"I've heard such a lot about you from Tom, Mr. Carruthers, that I feel I know you already."

But Tom Caldwell was speaking again.

"Lunch, Bill; you must. Look here, we must get on; we're blocking the traffic. Where are you going now?"

"To a place in King Street," answered the other.

"Hop in the back; we'll take you there. And then—lunch. I insist."

HE opened the door and half forced the other man in, and the next moment the car was gliding towards Leicester Square. And again the sense of unreality came over Bill Carruthers. Subconsciously he realized that the girl drove with the sure touch of an expert, but his brain was foggy and dull at one moment and full of freakish fancies the next. Like fever dreams; only Carruthers had no fever.

"What number, old man?" Tom's voice roused him, and he sat up with a jerk. Of course; he'd come to King Street in Tom Caldwell's car. Really—this would never do; the luxury of woolgathering would never do for him. He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket and produced a slip of paper.

"430 D. It's a warehouse of sorts."

Joyce Caldwell drove slowly along and stopped before the door.

"Hurry up, old man," said Tom. "And then we'll go off and make an oyster or two wilt."

Brother and sister watched him cross the pavement and go through the swing doors.

"Dear old Bill! Fancy running into him like that." Tom lit a cigarette. "The last time I saw him was at the Divisional dinner three years ago."

"What is he doing now?" asked his sister.

"The Lord knows. Clever chap; probably making a fortune."

"For a man who is making a fortune," said the girl, quietly, "his clothes are a bit shabby."

"What damned rot!" cried her brother, indignantly. "His clothes are perfectly all right. What's the matter with them? And anyway—even if they were threadbare—what's that got to do with it? Bill's one of the salt of the earth; apart altogether from the trifling fact that he saved my life." He looked at the girl with growing wrath. "If you don't want to lunch with us, because his clothes aren't all you fancy, he and I will lunch alone."

She turned her head and looked at him. And it was only when a man saw Joyce Caldwell full face that he could realize her unique and wonderful charm. It lay in her expression rather than in any particular beauty of feature, and as she looked at her brother he understood, not for the first time, the cause of the relays of men who always surrounded her.

Just now that expression reminded him of a mother tolerantly reproving her young and foolish offspring.

"You were always a fool, Tom," she said, calmly. "And lately I have noticed symptoms of your becoming a damned fool."

Then she leaned forward on the steering wheel and stared down the street, while her brother made explosive noises in his throat beside her.

"Well, anyway," he said at length, "will you lunch or will you not?"

"Of course I shall lunch," she answered. And then she added, with apparent irrelevance, "I think he's got the bravest eyes of any man I've ever met—and the proudest."

The swing door opened again, and Bill Carruthers came across the pavement.

"Finished, old man?" cried Tom.

"Quite," said the other, with a grave smile. "The interview was most decisive."

"Splendid! Then pop in again and we'll tackle this matter of lunch. Where shall we go?"

"The Milan grill," said his sister, quietly, and let in the clutch.

Tom raised his eyebrows.

"I thought you loathed the bally place. The last time you went there you said you'd never seen so many gluttonous human beings in your life."

She swung the car into the Strand.

"Perhaps they will be better to-day. And, by the way, Tom, don't order any cocktails before lunch."

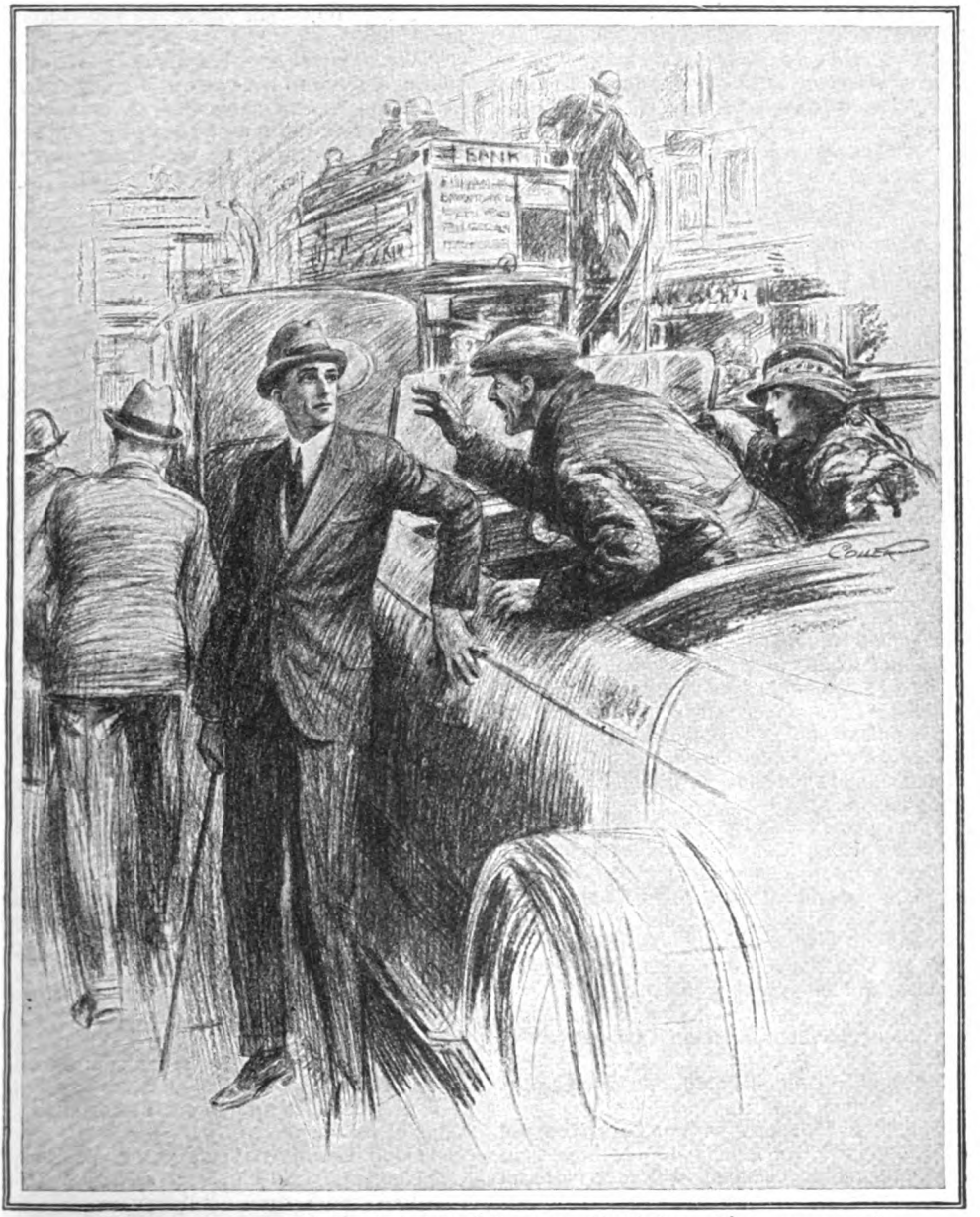
"Not have a cocktail?" he gasped. "When I've only just met Bill! But—why not?"

"Because they're not at all good for anybody in Lent," she answered. "Don't ask questions, old man; do what I say. We'll leave the car in Waterloo Place."

A few minutes later they entered the Milan grill.

"Go and get a table, Tom," said the girl. "And hurry up about it; I'm most frightfully hungry. A nice corner one, where we can talk." She sat down as her brother departed and smiled at Carruthers. "I am so glad to meet you. Tom used almost to bore Dad and me with his panegyrics on a man we didn't know."

"A dreadful exaggerator is Tom," answered Carruthers.



"Bill Carruthers, by all that's holy! Bill—you old blighter, how are you?"

"When a man saves another man's life a little exaggeration is allowable."

"It was nothing," said Carruthers, simply. "Had the positions been reversed, he would have done the same for me."

He swayed suddenly in his chair, and gripped the table in front of him. His eyes were closed, and the buzzing in his head grew louder. Then it passed and he glanced quickly at the girl. But she had noticed nothing and he heaved a sigh of relief. To be asked if he was ill or anything like that would be more than he could stand. This utterly adorable girl—dear old Tom—it was out of the question that they should ever know. And though few people pray in the Milan grill—yet a strange prayer went up at that moment. . . .

"Dear God! let me eat like a gentleman."

And the man who prayed was Bill Carruthers.

"I've got a table, old thing," came Tom's voice. "And I've ordered lunch."

"What have you ordered?" said his sister.

"A few oysters; a bird; some pêches Melba, and a bottle of bubbly."

"Well, as far as I'm concerned, Tom, go and cancel it," remarked the girl. "I want a full-size porterhouse steak, with fried potatoes and all sorts of vegetables. And before that, to get on with at once, an omelette. You and Mr. Carruthers can please yourselves. I'm hungry."

"Hungry!" gasped Tom. "Why, great heavens, my dear woman, you must be up the pole. It takes three men to lift one of their porterhouse steaks."

"Splendid!" said the girl. "That's just what I feel like. What about you, Mr. Carruthers?"

"Well, really, I feel rather like it myself," answered Carruthers, forcing a smile.

"Then there you are, Tom," said his sister. "Two full-size porterhouse steaks, and two omelettes. And you can have your oysters and your bird. And let us know as soon as the omelette is ready."

SLIGHTLY dazed, her brother retired again to the grill-room to countermand his original order, leaving the other two outside. And suddenly the girl gave an annoyed exclamation. She was peering into the inner recesses of one of those mysterious feminine bags, and then she looked up at her companion.

"How aggravating!" she cried. "I've left all my change at home. Could you give me some silver for a ten-shilling note?"

A dull red stained Carruthers' cheeks, and he fumbled in his pockets.

"I—er——" he began, but the girl had opened a new compartment with an air of relief.

"It's all right," she said. "My mistake. It was here all the time."

She wasn't looking at him, and the red died slowly down, leaving him whiter than ever. What an escape! What a merciful escape!

He made some humorous remark concerning the intricacies of these indispensable abominations, but it seemed to fall flat. At any rate, she made no answer—only went on fumbling with her bag.

"You fool," ran her thoughts, "you stupid fool! Didn't you know already without that? Oh! won't that idiot Tom ever come?"

He did at last, wearing a slightly aggrieved expression, and his sister rose at once to her feet.

"Come on," she cried. "I'm simply famishing."

"Well, if you eat that steak, you'll have to hire a crane to lift you out of your chair," said Tom, waxing sarcastic. Events somehow were not turning out quite as he anticipated. No cocktail, no nice lunch, porterhouse steaks—— And Joyce—what the devil was the matter with her? She seemed so quiet, so different to usual. Before Bill, too, of all people.

He dug a fork into an oyster with an air of peevishness; no accounting for girls. And then suddenly he happened to glance across the table at Bill, and the suspicion of a frown appeared on his face. He banished it instantly; he was loyal to the core, was Tom. But Bill's coat sleeve had slipped back a little, revealing his shirt cuff. Well, apart from the fact that the shirt was flannel—after all, fellows did wear grey flannel shirts with single button cuffs presumably, or no one would make the beastly things—apart from that, it struck him that the cuff was not too clean.

He started in heavily on plays. His best friend couldn't call Tom a brilliant conversationalist, but he had one invaluable asset. What he lacked in quality, he made up in quantity. He burbled serenely on, and his audience could listen or not as they pleased. It made not the slightest difference to them or to Tom.

And on this occasion a vague feeling that all was not quite as it should be spurred him on to dizzy heights. He launched into a completely pointless story which had something to do with a girl and a mashie niblick and the pond hole at Worplesdon. In fact, the only merit in the story was that it was interminable. It lasted well into the porterhouse steak. And at the crucial moment, just as the *bonne bouche* was coming, Joyce interrupted him.

"Tell the waiter to give us some champagne, Tom."

Tom spluttered out like a motor running short of petrol.

"Good Lord! haven't you had any?"

"Not yet," said his sister, calmly. "But I'd like some now, and so would Mr. Carruthers."

"My dear old Bill," cried Tom, "forgive me. I apologize; I abase myself."

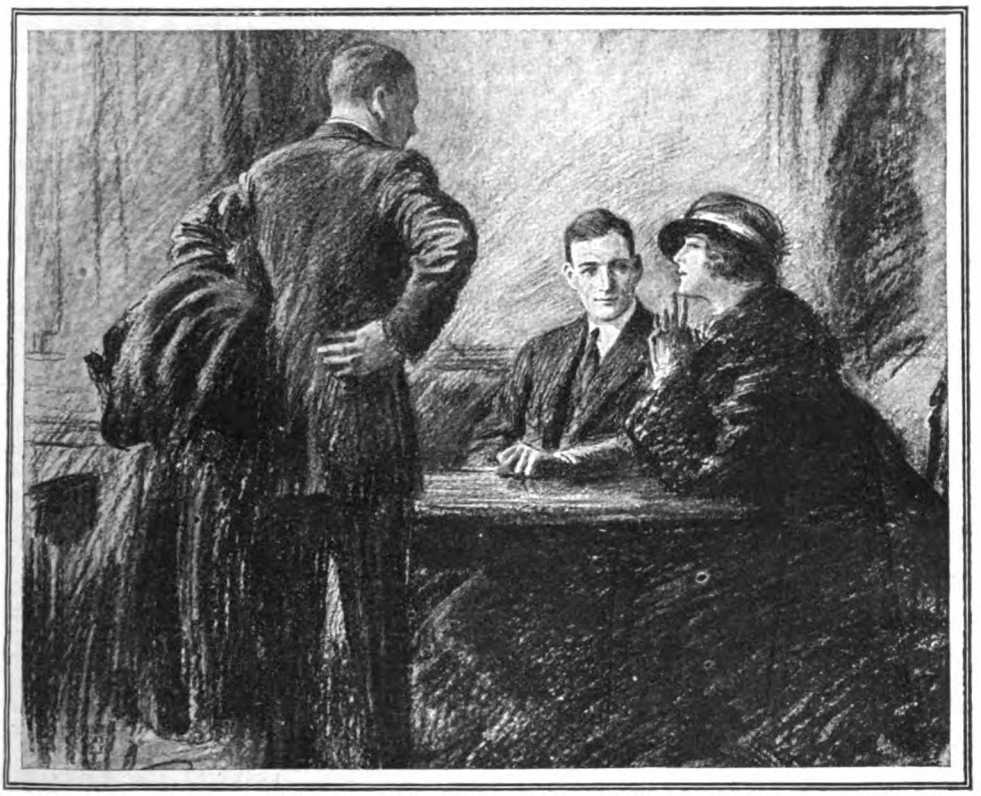
He signed furiously to the waiter, and then looked quickly at Bill. The old boy looked different, somehow; more like his old self. Coming to think of it, he hadn't looked too fit before lunch; bit washed out and cheap. Morning after the night before sort of business.

"How's the old porterhouse steak, people? Great heavens! old thing"—

he gazed at his sister's plate—" you don't mean to say you've lowered it ? "

" Very nearly all," she answered.

" Judging by your conversational efforts you must have been pretty busy," said Tom, brightly. " And old Bill's going strong still. Remember those bully stews in had caused that glorious girl to decide on a porterhouse steak was beside the point ; perhaps it was true that there was a Power who tried a man thus far and no farther. But he couldn't go and spend a week-end for the very good reason that he'd pawned his evening-clothes two months ago.



" Then there you are, Tom," said his sister. " Two full-size porterhouse steaks, and two omelettes. And you can have your oysters and your bird."

France, old man ? Gad ! how they used to go down. But then one really was hungry."

Bill smiled slightly.

" Extraordinary condition to have been in, wasn't it, Tom ? "

" Good old days in some ways and all that," said his host, profoundly. " But it seems to me I've been doing most of the talking. How's yourself, Bill ? Haven't been working too hard, have you ? Struck me you weren't looking too frightfully fit, don't you know ? Doesn't do to overdo it, old man. Why don't you come down and spend a week-end with us ? The governor would love to meet you."

Into the grey eyes there came a sudden glint of laughter. Courage had come back, and God alone knew that it had been only just in time. What sudden Heaven-sent whim

" It's very good of you, Tom," he said, gravely. " But I'm too busy at the moment. Later on, perhaps."

" Can't you manage one afternoon away from the office ? " asked the girl. " It's such a glorious day, and we could run down there in the car. Then back after dinner."

Bill Carruthers almost laughed. Into his mind there flashed his recent interview with an oleaginous Jew in King Street, and that gentleman's last remark :—

" Get out of my offith, before I kick you out. I've nothing for you."

Kick him out ! The little swine—the miserable little swine. He glanced at the girl, and she was looking at him with a strange, grave smile that made his heart miss a beat and then race for two or three. Take a pull, Bill Carruthers ; this won't do. Penniless down-and-outers don't count in the

social scheme. But she'd never know, and Tom would never know—and, oh, God!—to forget for one day.

"I think I can manage that," he said, quietly. "It's very good of you to suggest it, Miss Caldwell."

"Then let's go at once," she cried. "Pay the bill, Tom; Mr. Carruthers and I will be in the car."

He sat beside her on the way down, with Tom in the back. She didn't speak much, and, leaning back in his corner, he studied her profile. Once, as if realizing his occupation, she turned and looked at him with the same grave little smile on her lips.

"I'm glad you could come, Mr. Carruthers," she said. "I don't think you can realize how much Tom means to Dad, and but for you——"

She left her sentence unfinished, and once more stared at the road in front. And the man by her side lay back in his seat breathing in the peace of the country in spring. He felt like a swimmer who had been battling in heavy seas, and had come at last to calm water. Outside the breakers still seethed and roared; to-morrow he would have to start the weary fight all over again. But to-day was his; just one day of make-believe.

THE car swung through two iron gates, and up a long drive towards a big house screened by huge trees. Velvety lawns stretched down to a lake on which two stately swans sailed majestically. It was just a bit of old England—untouched, unspoiled. And there are not many left.

There was no house-party, for which fact Bill Carruthers heaved a sigh of relief. And all through the long, lazy afternoon—warm, by some kindly dispensation, as a day in July—the four of them sat and talked on the terrace overlooking the lake. Make-believe it might be—this courteous, charming, grateful old man; Joyce—he called her that in his mind just because it was make-believe; dear old Tom—but how utterly wonderful! And the minutes flew and the shadows lengthened until a sudden chill little breeze warned them that it was still early spring. So they went indoors, and Tom took him upstairs to wash.

"Ten minutes, old man," he said, as he left him. "And the governor is routing out the vintage port."

He shut the door to find Joyce beckoning to him.

"Come into Dad's study," she said. "I want to talk to you both."

A little surprised, he followed her into the room where his father was already standing in front of the fireplace.

"What's the mystery?" he inquired, lighting a cigarette.

"During the war," said his sister, quietly, "you may remember that I drove an ambulance in Serbia. And there was one particular thing I saw a good deal of. That thing was starvation. There's no mistaking it."

The two men exchanged a surprised glance; what on earth was Joyce driving at?

"To-day, Tom—I saw it again." She gave a little twisted smile, and turned her back on both of them. "Why do you suppose I told you not to have cocktails? Why do you think I ordered that awful porterhouse steak? Why, just because he was faint for food: starving. I don't believe he's tasted anything for days."

Tom's honest face slowly turned a deep magenta.

"Rot! bunkum!" he stammered.

"My dear, surely you're mistaken!" said her father, mildly.

"I tell you I'm not mistaken," said the girl, with a little stamp of her foot. "I've seen it too often to be mistaken. I saw it when Tom spoke to him in Piccadilly; I saw it again when he left the car in King Street. Didn't you see the way he walked, Tom? But I wasn't quite sure how bad he was till you were ordering lunch. He nearly fainted outside in the lounge." She swung round facing them. "Starving, Dad—starving; without a copper in his pockets. Don't ask me how I know; I do. And he saved Tom's life. What are we going to do about it?"

"My dear," said her father, helplessly, "I quite agree. What are we going to do about it?"

"Look here, Joyce," said her brother, "are you sure about this?"

"Absolutely," answered the girl.

"But you talked about his leaving the office and all that sort of thing."

"Because you've only got to look in his eyes for one second to realize that he's as proud as Lucifer. If he thought I'd guessed the condition he was in he'd never have come for this run."

"Then it boils down to this: we've got to find him a job, and a good one," said Tom, decisively. "And until we've done that he's got to stop on in this house. Good heavens!" he went on. "I can't believe it. Bill starving! Why didn't he let me know?"

"Just because of that pride of his, of course. Why did he say he couldn't get away for a week-end on account of work? Because he wasn't going to tell us that he had no clothes to wear. And if he thinks we are offering him a job out of charity, he'll throw it back in our faces."

"Merridew asked me to-day whether I had taken any steps to find a successor for him," interposed her father.

"By Jove, governor—the very thing!" cried Tom. "Don't you think so, Joyce?"

"Well, there's just one point, my dear boy. Does he know anything at all about land agent's work?"

"Does it matter, Dad?" Joyce slipped her hand through her father's arm. "Does anything matter except that the man who saved Tom's life out in France is penniless and starving? We're both rather fond of Tom, you know."

The old man smiled.

"I suppose we are. All right; I'll ask him if he'd care to take it on. Even if he doesn't know anything about it, he can learn. And he struck me as being exactly the type of man I'd like to have for the job."

"He's one of the best," said Tom, simply.

"Do you mind, Dad, if you'd let me lead up to it?" said Joyce. "You can come in—you and Tom—at the last moment; but I think I can do the preliminary part better."

"My dear—I shall be only too delighted," cried her father.

"And, of course, he'll stop here to-night, anyway. As it wasn't arranged, Tom can easily suggest lending him anything he wants. There's the gong. Now, don't forget—not a word, not a hint, of what I've told you."

With a final warning glance at both men she went out into the hall as Bill Carruthers came down the stairs.

"Mr. Carruthers," she said, "would you mind frightfully if we didn't go back to town to-night? I find there are one or two things I must do here, and Tom can fix you up for the night."

"Of course I can, old boy," said Tom. "Anything you want."

Into Bill Carruthers' mind there flashed a picture of his bed that night if they did go back to town—a seat on the Embankment. Truly Fate was being kind to him for this one day—even if it was make-believe.

"I am in your hands, Miss Caldwell," he said. And then his mouth twitched with an irresistible smile. "I don't think the business will suffer in my absence."

IT was dangerous, he knew, but all through dinner he let his thoughts centre on the girl who sat so gracefully facing her father. It comes quickly to a man sometimes, that blinding certainty that he has met the one woman who matters or will ever matter. And it had come to Bill Carruthers that day. What matter the sheer futility of it? Nothing and no one could take from him his dreams.

He hardly heard some remark she made to her father; he was watching a little tendril of hair that had escaped just by her ear. And when she turned to him he had to pull himself together with an effort.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured. "For the moment I was thinking of other things."

"I was wondering if you knew of anyone, Mr. Carruthers, who could take the place of Mr. Merridew—Dad's estate agent?"

"Merridew is getting on in years," said her father, "and I've got to find a successor somewhere. Six hundred a year and a house."

Six hundred a year and a house! The words rang in Carruthers' brain. Six hundred a year and a house!

"Would the work be very difficult?" he heard himself saying.

"Nothing that a moderately intelligent man can't pick up in a year," said his host. "Of course, he must like an outdoor life and be a gentleman."

"Pity old Bill can't take it on himself," said Tom, cracking a nut. "He loves an outdoor life. Honestly, old man, with your tastes I don't know how you stick the City."

And now temptation was hammering at him. Why not? A job; a country job; a house. And Joyce. To see her sometimes. . . . To speak to her. . . .

"It is hardly likely that such an idea would appeal to Carruthers," said the old man, but he looked at his guest a little questioningly. "Of course, if it should, I need hardly say that there is no man living I would sooner have in the job than the very gallant gentleman who saved Tom's life."

He raised his glass with old-fashioned courtesy towards the man who sat so silently staring in front of him. So it wasn't a make-believe day after all; he wouldn't have to start that awful, weary round again to-morrow. All he had to do was to accept, and put the past out of his mind for ever. After all, he had done nothing to be ashamed of; it hadn't been his fault—these last few months of hell. So why not?

He glanced at the girl, and she was looking at him with a curious intentness. He looked at Tom, and he was lighting a cigarette. He knew the thing was his for the asking; he knew he could do the work. And still he hesitated.

"Accept, you fool," rang a voice in his brains. "Accept at once, and later on you can allude jokingly to the fact that it was a very fortunate offer for you. Don't give yourself away; don't humiliate yourself needlessly."

Came the answer quiet and insistent: "You're taking a job under false pretences. They think you a successful man. Would

they have offered you this thing if they knew you'd even pawned your underclothes ? "

And suddenly he hesitated no longer. He

"My dear, surely you're mistaken," said her
"I tell you I'm not mistaken," said the girl,

turned to his host, and when he spoke his voice was steady.

"You have made me a very wonderful offer, Mr. Caldwell—how wonderful it is you can have no idea. Unfortunately, your offer has been made without a full knowledge of the facts. When Tom and Miss Caldwell saw me in Piccadilly this morning I was on my way to answer an advertisement for a job as a night porter. When I got to the place I found that the post had already been filled ; to be exact I was the twenty-fifth unsuccessful applicant. And the Jew I interviewed removed any lingering hope I had that he desired to look at me any longer. Other Jews and employers of labour have

father, mildly.
with a little stamp of her foot.

been doing the same thing now for five months.

"I'm afraid I was rather at the end of my tether. Until lunch to-day my only food during the last few days has been a bit of bread and the outside rind of an old onion given me on the Embankment some nights ago by a drunken woman. That is why I accepted Tom's offer of lunch. But during lunch I let it be understood by him and your daughter that I was doing well in the City. That was a lie; but it never dawned on me that it would have any consequences. Now, of course, things are different. Believing that I was what I said I was, you have tentatively suggested that I should become your estate agent. That has made it necessary for me to tell you the truth. I apologize for not having done so before; but"—for a moment his voice faltered—"I was looking on this as a day of make-believe. It has given me new hope and strength to carry on. There is only one other thing I'd like to say—it was stupidity and not dishonesty that brought me to my present position. I was swindled out of what money I had."

"You silly old fool—you silly, damned old fool!" broke in Tom, gruffly. "What the devil do you want to tell us that for, when it's obvious to anyone who knew you? I take it hard, Bill. Why didn't you let me know?"

"I don't like charity, Tom," said the other, smiling. His eyes came round to the girl, but she had left her chair and was standing by the open window staring out into the garden.

And then the old man spoke.

"I take it hard, too, dear fellow," he said. "Have I no rights at all as Tom's father? Because you've had bad luck, what has that got to do with the offer I have made you?"

"But you made it," stammered Carruthers, "thinking that—thinking that I was—what I said I was."

"No, he didn't," began Tom, eagerly—and then stopped short. Willingly would he have bitten his tongue out—but it was too late. The mischief was done.

"So you knew?" said Carruthers, quietly. He rose to his feet, and the grey lines had settled on his face again. "I see; I ought to have guessed. Charity: for saving Tom's life."

"That is unjust and unfair, Mr. Carruthers," said a quiet voice at his elbow. It was Joyce: Joyce with her head thrown back and a wonderful light in her eyes. "It is true that my father knew—I told him. I saw the condition you were in: I've seen starvation too often in Serbia during the war not to recognize it. But to state that Dad has made you this offer out of charity is belittling you and belittling us. You've been to these other men—strangers—asking for work. Had they offered it, would you have said it was charity? They knew the condition you were in; men like you don't ask for jobs as night porters for preference. And yet when my father offers you a job you turn it contemptuously down. Presumably you regard it as such a poor one that it's beneath you to accept it."

From behind him came the sound of a closing door, but he was barely conscious of it.

"Great heavens! Miss Caldwell—you can't think I meant it that way." He stretched out an imploring hand. "You can't think that I'm such an unspeakable cad as to view your father's wonderful offer like that."

"I'm really not very interested in what you think," she said, coolly. "All I know is that my father has made you a certain suggestion, and that you regard it as charity. If that isn't what you think, all I can say is that you've expressed yourself very badly."

And suddenly something snapped in Bill Carruthers' brain. A continued course of starvation wears the human mechanism out to snapping point, and that point had come to him. He broke down and cried like a child—his face buried in his hands. And with infinite tenderness in her eyes she watched him even as she had watched other men cry just because they had dropped a knife on the floor or something equally trivial.

TOM'S face appeared for a moment at the window, and she signed to him imperatively to go away. Then she waited, being the manner of a girl who has learned many things in the book of life. And after a while the shaking shoulders grew still, and he looked up at her.

"So that was why you ordered a porterhouse steak?"

"Of course," she answered, with a smile. "And a jolly good steak it was!"

He stood up facing her.

"I'm not going to apologize for making a fool of myself," he said, quietly. "I would to most people—but not to you. I think you're the most wonderful girl I've ever met. And because you're that, you'll understand what I'm going to say. It's not due to weakness; and, believe me, it's not impertinence. It is a statement of fact, as unalterably true as the fact that we are together in this room. Six hours can sometimes mean as much—aye, more—than six years. In these six hours—nine, to be accurate—since I first met you, I have learned the meaning of the word love. There will never be another woman in my life except you. And that is the real reason why I cannot accept your father's offer, though naturally that is not the reason I shall give him. I shall tell him that I don't know enough of the work to feel justified in accepting. But I want you to know the truth. And above all I want to thank you for doing what no other girl in the world could have done for me to-day—saved me from cracking, when the end was very near."

She had stood very still as he spoke, and her eyes had never wavered from his.

"Then you intend to return to London to-morrow?" she said, as he finished.

"If you'll be good enough to take me in the car," he answered. "I'm afraid my finances do not allow of a train fare."

"Nor, presumably, of my doctor's bill."

He stared at her uncomprehendingly.

"My dear man," she remarked, "if I've got to spend the next few weeks eating porterhouse steaks with you, I shall have to go into a home. In fact, I refuse to do it. So I'll just tell Dad you're sorry you were a fool—and you can start with old Merridew to-morrow."

And then, for the first time, her voice shook a little.

"You silly old ass; you dear, silly old ass! Don't you realize that I was never nearer making a fool of myself in my life than when I saw the look on your face after I asked you for change while we were waiting for lunch?"

She went to the door, leaving him staring after her.

"Dad," she called, "Bill's going to take on the job—er—for a time."

"Splendid!" answered her father. "Till he gets something better."

"I rather think that's the way he looks at it," she remarked, demurely. And then she looked at Bill. "Isn't it?"

Kitchen Company

BY

W. W. JACOBS

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBIN

PRACTICE makes perfect, and when Mrs. Brampton, from her seat by the window, announced the approach of the Captain, Mr. Leonard Scott kissed Miss Brampton in the small hall and made his usual dignified exit to the kitchen. To leave by the side-entrance was the best way of avoiding trouble with a man who was always looking out for it. Mr. Scott bestowed a nod upon the smiling young mistress of the kitchen, and with his hand upon the back-door waited to hear the Captain at the front.

"One o' these days," began Clara, who loved to dwell upon the gruesome, "he'll come——"

She broke off and listened. "He's coming," she said, in a thrilling whisper. "He's coming the back way."

Mr. Scott started, hesitated, and was lost.

"Fly!" exclaimed Clara, pointing by accident to the ceiling.

The young man scowled at her, and before he had time to alter his expression found himself gazing at the burly form and inflamed visage of Captain Brampton.

"Well?" barked the latter. "What are you doing in my kitchen? Eh? What have you got to say for yourself?"

Mr. Scott coughed and tried to collect his thoughts. In the front room Mrs. Brampton and her daughter eyed each other in silent

Copyright, 1924, by W. W. Jacobs.

consternation. Then, in response to a peremptory bellow, Mrs. Brampton rose and made a trembling passage to the kitchen.

"What does this mean?" demanded the Captain in grating accents.

His wife stood looking helplessly from one to the other, and, instead of answering the question, passed it on.

"What does this mean, Clara?" she demanded.

"Eh?" said that astonished maiden. "What does what mean?"

"This," said the Captain, sternly, with a jerk of his head towards Mr. Scott. "Did you invite him here?"

Clara started—but in a lesser degree than Mr. Scott—and looked down modestly at a hole in the hearth-rug. Mrs. Brampton and her daughter gazed at her in hushed expectation.

"I didn't, not to say, invite him," replied Clara, "but I can't help him coming here."

"*H'm!* Perhaps you didn't try," said the Captain, with unexpected mildness. "How long have you known him?"

"Some time, sir," said Clara, vaguely.

"Does he want to marry you?"

Clara looked at her mistress for guidance, but the latter was engaged at the moment in an eye-to-eye duel with the fermenting Mr. Scott. Over the Captain's face stole an expression of great and unusual benevolence.

"Well, well," he said, slowly. "We've all been young once. He's not much to look at, but he looks clean and respectable. When do you think of getting married?"

"That's for him to say, sir," said the modest Clara.

"Well, there's no hurry," said the Captain, "no hurry. He can come round once a week for you on your evening out, but no other time, mind."

"Thank you, sir," said Clara, who was beginning to enjoy herself. "It's my evening out to-night, sir. He was going to take me to the pictures."

A STIFLED exclamation came from the direction where Mr. Scott was standing, which the Captain chose to interpret as an expression of gratitude. With instructions to Clara to regale her admirer with bread and cheese and one glass of beer, he shepherded his wife and daughter from the kitchen. Humming a light air, Clara began to set the table.

"What the devil did you want to say I was going to take you to the pictures for?" demanded the ungrateful Mr. Scott.

"'Cos I wanted to go," said his hostess, calmly.

Mr. Scott regarded her coldly. "I will walk with you as far as the corner of this road," he said, with an air of finality.

"We'll go to the best seats and I'll have a box of chocolates," said Clara. "Do you like chocolates?"

"No," said the other, sternly.

"Praise be!" said the girl, piously. "My other young man——"

Mr. Scott coughed violently.

"All right," said the girl, "don't get excited. He's away on a job for a week or two, else I wouldn't dare to be seen with you. When the cat's away the mice will play," she added.

The young man eyed her in amazement. This was a new Clara. His lips quivered and his eyes watered. He took up his glass of beer and nodded.

"Right-o!" he agreed.

He smoked a cigarette while the girl went upstairs to dress, and a little later, watched by three pairs of eyes from the front window, sailed up the street with her arm-in-arm.

"She's too good for him," said the Captain, with decision.

"Much," assented his daughter, with a smile.

"Tailor's dummy!" soliloquized the Captain.

"Cheap tailor, too," murmured the acquiescent Miss Brampton. "Did you notice how baggy his trousers are at the knees?"

The Captain shot a glance at her. Twenty years' experience of a wife whose only anxiety was to please him was not the best preparation for handling a daughter who, to say the least of it, had other ambitions. He began to fear that she had inherited more of his strength of character—a quality for which some of his friends found another name—than was convenient.

"He's a softy," he growled. "He ought to have a year or two at sea. That might make a man of him."

He got up and went into the garden, leaving mother and daughter to discuss the possibilities of a situation which had found them somewhat unprepared.

"It might have been worse," said Mrs. Brampton. "If your father had caught him in here——"

"He couldn't eat him," said her daughter, rebelliously.

"There are worse things than being eaten," said Mrs. Brampton, with some feeling.

Miss Brampton nodded. "Taking Clara to the pictures, for instance," she remarked. "Poor Leonard!"

Her mother sniffed. "I dare say he will get over it," she said, dryly. "Unless Clara's young man gets to hear of it. From what she has told me he is a very hot-tempered young man—and very strong."

"Pity father didn't find ***him*** in the kitchen," said the dutiful daughter.

She sat down, and in sympathetic mood tried to share the misery of the absent one at the cinema. A vision of Clara's hat, perilously near Mr. Scott's shoulder, mercifully eluded her, but, the window being open to the summer air, she was unable to help hearing the cheerful babble of laughter that heralded their return. It seemed to strike a wrong note; and the couple of noisy kisses which Clara saw fit to bestow upon the back of her hand for the Captain's benefit were registered on the wrong target.

Mrs. Brampton obtained the explanation from Clara next day, and accepted it without prejudice. Her daughter declined to accept it at all.

"You quite understand that he must not come to see you again?" she said, stiffly.

"But he's got to," said the staring handmaiden. "The Captain said so. And if he plays fast-and-loose with me I'm to have him up for breach of promise. Lively for me, ain't it? When *I* think of Bill and his temper, I get goose-flesh all over."

The ladies eyed each other in silent consternation.

"Your father *knows*," said the elder, at last. "He has done this on purpose."

"Set a trap for him," said Clara, nodding. "Looks like it. And I'm the little bit o' cheese, I s'pose."

Mrs. Brampton stared at her.

"Father forgets that I am nineteen," said her daughter. "Why shouldn't I——?"

"I was only fifteen when *I* started," murmured Clara, "and not big for my age neither."

"That will do," said Mrs. Brampton.

"Yes'm," said the girl. "Still——"

"Still what?" demanded her mistress.

"I've been dragged into it," said Clara, mutinously. "Nobody asked me or troubled about my feelings. I do the best I can, and that's all the thanks I get for it. Suppose I had told the Captain it was Miss Edith he was after? Where would you have been then?"

"We won't discuss it," said Mrs. Brampton, with an air of feeble dignity.

walked with his head in the clouds and his feet on various choice border plants—

She made as stately an exit as the size of the kitchen would allow, and, carefully closing the door of the sitting-room, made a few remarks on Clara's character, and more on her lack of it.

"It's no good blaming Clara," said her daughter. "It's father's doing. He wants to make Leonard look a fool first and scare him away afterwards. He'll tell all his friends about it."

"Mr. Hopkins for one," said Mrs. Brampton, nodding sagely. "I wonder——"

"I don't," said the girl, reddening.

"Your father seems to have taken a great fancy to him," continued Mrs. Brampton. "Now, does he come here to see your father, or——"

"Or," said her daughter, bitterly. "It's just like father. I suppose he will want to choose my tooth-powder for me next. But he won't get any satisfaction out of me—*or* Leonard. I'll see to that. As for Mr. Hopkins—*brrh!*"

She beamed, however, on that innocent man when her father brought him in next day to see the garden, and when the wily Captain went indoors for his pipe made no attempt to follow him. It was a pipe that was notorious for the discovery of new and unusual hiding-places, and on this occasion made no attempt to belie its reputation.

Meantime, the delighted Mr. Hopkins, under the skilful management of Miss Brampton, walked with his head in the clouds and his feet on various choice border plants.

"Hadn't you better walk on the path?" inquired the girl, who had been monopolizing three-quarters of it. "It's more comfortable."

Mr. Hopkins started. "Good heavens!" he said, in an alarmed voice, as he bent down to render first aid to a stock with a broken neck. "Did I do that?"

Miss Brampton nodded. "Those, too, I think," she replied, with a wave of her hand. "Don't you care for flowers?"

Mr. Hopkins, who was fearfully endeavouring to conceal the traces of his crime, made no reply. When the Captain came out they were both speechless, but he was, if anything, the redder of the two.

"These paths are very narrow, father," remarked the humane Edith.

The Captain made a noise.

"Afraid—crowding—Miss Edith," panted the offender.

The Captain made another noise. In the present company all the useful words he knew were useless.

"Did you find your pipe, father?" inquired the persevering Miss Brampton.

The Captain was understood to say "Yes." At the same time he favoured her with a glance which would have made her mother tremble. On Miss Brampton it had a bracing effect.

"Father's always mislaying his pipe," she said, with a bright laugh. "I shouldn't trouble any more about those, if I were you, Mr. Hopkins. You can't do them any good, and you are standing on an antirrhinum."

Mr. Hopkins removed his foot hastily, and placing it carefully in the centre of the path offered up another apology. It was received with what the Captain fondly believed to be a smile.

"Accidents will happen," he said, hoarsely.

"In the best-regulated families," said Miss Brampton, with a satisfied smile.

She paid a touching tribute to the excellence of the victim after the visitor had gone, and sought for some time for an explanation of the tragedy.

"He must have been 'wool-gathering,'" she declared at length.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded her father.

"Absent-minded," said Edith. "He seemed like a man walking on air, instead of some of the best stocks in the neighbourhood. Even Clara's young man would have more sense than that."

"Clara's young man won't go into my garden," said the Captain. "The kitchen is the place for him."

He stalked out into the garden, and, digging up hopeless cases with a trowel, sought to revive the less badly injured with a water-can.

IT might have been a sign of a forgiving nature, but was more likely due to an obstinate one, that he invited Mr. Hopkins back to the scene of his footwork a day or two later. Missing plants had been replaced by a consignment from the florist's, and rolled paths and raked flower-beds testified to the Captain's industry. Everything was "shipshape and Bristol fashion" as the greatly relieved visitor walked with Miss Brampton in the garden in the cool of the evening. The Captain, after satisfying himself that Mr. Hopkins was walking almost as carefully as a performer on the tight-rope, had disappeared indoors.

The path was narrow, but even when Miss Brampton sent electric thrills through his being by leaning against him, Mr. Hopkins kept to it. The air was soft and the scent of the flowers delightful. Never before had his conversation been so appreciated. The low-voiced laughter of his companion was a tribute to his wit as rare as it was welcome.

"You ought to write plays," she said, thoughtfully, as she planted her foot firmly on a geranium.

"You want influence to get them accepted," said Mr. Hopkins.

"I should try, if I were you, though," said the girl, nearly missing another geranium.

Mr. Hopkins purred. Miss Brampton, with downcast eyes, trod down six flowers in succession.

"Dialogue would be your strong point," mused the girl, continuing her ravages. "Crisp and sparkling."

She took the other side as they turned at the end of the path, and in a hushed voice called his attention to some beautiful cloud effects. Mr. Hopkins, with his head at an acute angle, murmured his admiration.

"An evening to remember," he said, very softly.

He brought his gaze slowly to earth and started convulsively.

"Giddy?" inquired the girl, with much solicitude.

Mr. Hopkins shook his head, and, speech failing him, pointed with a trembling finger to the prostrate victims of misdirected industry. Miss Brampton started in her turn.

"Oh, Mr. Hopkins!" she said, in accusing tones.

"I—I haven't been near them," stammered the unfortunate.

"They must have done it themselves, then," said the girl, calmly. "Perhaps they were not strong enough to stand the breeze."

Mr. Hopkins breathed heavily. "I—I really think——" he began.

"Yes?" said Miss Brampton.

"I don't know what to think," concluded the other, feebly.

His companion gazed wistfully at the wreckage.

"Poor father!" she said, softly. "He is so fond of his garden. He seems to know every flower, but, of course, he hasn't had these long enough to know them."

Mr. Hopkins groaned and cast a fearful glance at the house.

"It's his one hobby," continued the girl. "I have heard him use worse language about cats than anything else, I think. And the doctor says excitement is so bad for him."

"I can't understand it," ventured Mr. Hopkins, with an appealing glance.

"I wonder whether father will?" said the girl. "He is coming out, I think."

Mr. Hopkins looked around panic-stricken. Then he pulled out his watch.

"Good gracious!" he murmured. "I must be going, I think. No idea so late. Appointment."

He moved hastily in the direction of the side-gate and, hardly realizing the geniality of Miss Brampton's hand-clasp, disappeared. The girl stood watching until he had turned the corner and then went into the house.

"Where's Hopkins?" inquired the Captain.

"He has just gone."

"Gone!" repeated her father. "Why, I asked him to stay to supper. Did you send him off? Eh?"

His daughter shook her head. "He went off in a hurry," she murmured. "I think he had an idea that perhaps he had offended you."

"Rubbish!" grunted the Captain, eyeing her suspiciously. "What should he offend me about?"

"Knowing how fond you are of your flowers——" began Miss Brampton.

The Captain uttered a smothered cry and, springing from his chair, dashed into the garden. Cries that were anything but smothered, and words that ought to have been, brought his wife to her daughter's side. Together they watched the head of the house as, with fists raised to heaven, he danced a strange and frenzied dance down the path.

"He's wonderfully supple for his age," said the admiring daughter.

Mrs. Brampton shivered. "I don't suppose that poor young man will dare to show his face here again," she said, slowly.

"If he does, there will be an accident to the rose trees," said her daughter, compressing her lips. "I've had all I can stand of Mr. Hopkins."

"And then there's Mr. Scott," said her mother, plaintively. "Clara says that she thinks her young man has heard something, and if he should happen to meet them one evening——"

"It might be bad for the young man," said the girl, calmly. "Leonard would have a better nose if he didn't box so much. Look at father!"

Mrs. Brampton looked.

"He—he seems to be examining the footmarks," she gasped.

"Time I changed your sensible low-heeled shoes for something more dressy," said her daughter, disappearing.

She was back before the Captain re-entered the house, and, sitting cross-legged, displayed a pair of sharp-toed, high-heeled shoes of blameless aspect, which met his ardent gaze with a polished stare. He turned his back at last and stood gazing blankly out at his cherished garden.

It never occurred to him to accept defeat, and his daughter was therefore more annoyed than surprised to see Mr. Hopkins—a nervous, chastened Mr. Hopkins—back again after a few days. On this occasion, however, the Captain lingered in the garden,

"He's wonderfully supple for his age," said the admiring daughter

"Take my gal away, will yer" he shouted - "Take 'er to the Pictures, will yer?"

and from a deck-chair beneath the window watched his faltering steps.

Conscious of this scrutiny, the visitor babbled incoherences to Miss Brampton, until in self-defence she retreated to the house on the plea of a thorn in her foot.

The sound of Mr. Scott's voice in the kitchen did not add to her comfort. A glance from her window showed her that her father had taken her place with the visitor and was pointing out to him the merits of the rockery. She stole downstairs and, opening the kitchen-door, peeped in.

"I thought you were going to the cinema," she said, addressing Mr. Scott, coldly.

"Can't," was the reply. "Clara's Bill is outside and she's afraid to come."

"He's waiting for him," said Clara, breathlessly. "There'll be murder done—and I shall be the cause of it."

"Cheer up," said Mr. Scott. "He'll only have a week or two in a nice comfortable hospital. You'll be able to see him on Sunday afternoons and take him grapes."

"I know who'll want the grapes," said Clara, miserably. "You don't know his strength. I don't believe he knows it himself."

"Where is he?" demanded Miss Brampton.

"Outside the side-gate, miss," replied Clara. "Like a cat waiting for a mouse."

"A mouse!" ejaculated the startled Mr. Scott. "Now look here, Clara——"

"I'll go and send him away," said Miss Brampton, with decision.

She slipped into the garden and, her father's back still being towards her, opened the side-gate and looked out. A bullet-headed young man, standing just outside, drew up sharply at her appearance and stood scowling at her.

"Do you want to see Clara?" she inquired.

"I'm waiting," said Mr. Bill Jones, "waiting for a toff."

Miss Brampton stood regarding him with a puzzled air. Then she had an inspiration that almost took her breath away.

"Do you mean the gentleman who is in the garden talking to father?" she inquired.

Mr. Jones's eyes glistened. He licked his lips and stood breathing hard and short. Miss Brampton, with an encouraging smile, pushed the door open.

Mr. Jones needed no further invitation. With head erect and eyes ablaze he entered the garden and, catching sight of the unconscious Mr. Hopkins, strode rapidly towards him.

"Here! What do you want?" demanded the astonished Captain.

Mr. Jones ignored him, and, continuing his progress, thrust his face into that of Mr. Hopkins.

"Take my gal away, will yer?" he shouted. "Take 'er to the pictures, will yer? Take that!"

Mr. Hopkins took it and went down with a cry of anguish. Through a mist of pain he heard the voice of his assailant.

"Get up! Get up! else I'll jump on yer."

Mr. Hopkins got up, and the appearance of Mr. Jones was so terrible that he turned and fled, with the other in hot pursuit.

"Stop!" yelled the choking Captain. "Mind the flowers! Mind the fl——"

Mr. Hopkins paid no heed; neither, to

do him justice, did Mr. Jones. Firmly convinced that his life was in danger, the former performed miracles of agility, while his opponent pounded doggedly behind. A bad third, owing to his keeping to the path, the Captain followed raving in the rear.

Broken plants lay in the wake of Mr. Hopkins; churned-up earth marked the progress of Mr. Jones as he endeavoured to head him off. And at this juncture Mr. Scott appeared from the kitchen, shedding his coat.

"What the devil do you think you're doing?" he shouted.

Mr. Jones pulled up suddenly and favoured him with a menacing glare.

"Look at those flowers," cried Mr. Scott, severely. "You chump-headed, mutton-headed son of a gun!"

Mr. Jones stood irresolute. He looked longingly at Mr. Hopkins taking cover behind the Captain; then with a loud roar he threw himself upon this new arrival.

Mr. Hopkins went, somewhat reluctantly. He was a man of peace, but the sight of Mr. Jones's damages seemed in some way to afford him an odd feeling of satisfaction. The Captain stayed, to see fair play—also the only fight with fists he had seen since he left the sea. It was with almost a sigh that he went at length to help Mr. Scott assist his adversary to his feet. The dazed Mr. Jones, with Clara's arm about his waist, was led indoors and his head placed under the scullery tap. The cooling sounds of running water and the heated comments of Mr. Jones alone broke the silence.

"Well, that's over," said Mr. Scott, tenderly dabbing his face with his handkerchief, as Miss Brampton came out. "I'm afraid Clara has jilted me, sir."

The Captain grunted and eyed him curiously.

"I was going to take her to the cinema, now I suppose I shall have to go alone. Unless——"

The dazed Mr. Jones with Clara's arm about his waist, was led indoors

Mr. Scott side-stepped neatly and smote him heavily on the chin. Mr. Jones, turning in amazement, took three more and, being by this time acclimatized, settled down to a steady mill.

"You'd better go," said the Captain, harshly, to Mr. Hopkins. "This isn't a sight for you."

"Well?" barked the Captain, waiting.

"Unless Miss Brampton comes with me."

The Captain stood up and faced him, choking.

"Cinema!" he roared. "Cinema! If you want to do something to pass the evening, you can help her help me help make the garden tidy."

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY H. K. ELCOCK

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE EDGE OF A STORM.

IT is impossible to be near great historical events and not to desire to take part in them, or, at the least, to observe them. Egypt had suddenly become the storm-centre of the world, and chance had placed me there at that moment. Clearly I could not remain in Cairo, but must get up by hook or crook to the frontier. It was March, 1896, and the weather would soon be too warm for my wife, but she was good enough to say that she would wait with my sister until April if I would promise to return by then. At that time the general idea was that some great event would at once occur, though, looking back, one can see that that was hardly possible. Anyhow, I had a great urge to go south.

There was only one way to do it. The big morning papers had their men already upon the spot. But it was less likely that the evening papers were provided. I cabled to the *Westminster Gazette* asking to be made their correspondent *pro tem.* I had a cable back assenting. Armed with this I approached the proper authority, and so within a day or two I was duly appointed and everything was in order.

I had to make my own way up, and I had to get together some sort of kit. The latter was done hurriedly, and was of fearsome quality. I bought a huge revolver of Italian make, with a hundred shells, an ugly, unreliable weapon. I bought, also, a water-bottle, which was made of new resinous wood and gave a most horrible flavour of turpentine to everything put into it. It was like drinking varnish, but before I got back there were times when I was ready to drink varnish or anything else that was damp.

TO THE FRONTIER.

With a light khaki coat, riding breeches, a small valise, and the usual Christmas-tree hung round me I started off from Cairo by train to Assiout, where a small river boat was waiting. It was filled with officers going to the front, and we had a pleasant few days journeying to Assouan together. There were, I remember, several junior officers who have since made names in the world, Maxwell (now General Sir John Maxwell), and Hickman, who also rose to the top. There was a young cavalry lieutenant also, one Smythe, who seemed to me to be too gentle and quiet for such rough work as lay ahead. The next time I heard of him was when he was gazetted for the Victoria Cross. In soldiering there is nothing more deceptive than appearances. Your fierce, truculent man may always have a yellow streak where the gentle student has a core of steel. There lay one of the many

Copyright, 1924, by A. Conan Doyle.

mistakes which the Germans made later in judging those "unwarlike islanders," the British.

The great question at the opening of the campaign was whether the native fellah troops would stand. The five Negro battalions were as good as could be, but the record of the eight or nine Egyptian ones was not reassuring. The Arab of the Soudan is a desperate fanatic who rushes to death with the frenzy of a madman, and longs for close quarters where he can bury his spear in the body of his foeman, even though he carries several bullets in him before he reaches him. Would the Egyptians stand such onslaughts as these? It was thought improbable that they would, and so British battalions—the Connaughts, the Staffords, and others—were brought up to stiffen their battle-line. One great advantage the native soldiers had—and without it their case would have been hopeless—in that their officers were among the picked men of the British Army. Kitchener would have none but the unmarried, for it was to be a whole-hearted and, if need be, a desperate service, and, as the pay and life were good, he could accept or reject as he chose, so that his leaders were splendid. It was curious to see their fair faces and flaxen moustaches under the red tarbooshes as they marched at the side of their men.

The relations between these officers and their men were paternal. If an officer of black troops came to Cairo he would go back with a pillow-case stuffed with candies for his men. The Egyptians were more inscrutable, less sporting, and less lovable, but none the less their officers were very loyal to them, and bitterly resented the distrust shown by the rest of the army. One British officer at some early battle seized the enemy's flag and cried: "Well, the English shall not have this, anyhow." It is this spirit, whether in Egypt or in India, which makes the British officer an ideal leader of native troops. Even in the great Indian Mutiny they would not hear a word against their men until they were murdered by them.

At Assouan we were held up for a week, and no one was allowed to go farther. We were already well within the radius of the Arab raiders, for in the last year they had struck even farther north. The desert is like the sea, for if you have the camels, which correspond to the ships, your blow may fall anywhere, and your attack is not suspected until the moment that you appear. The crowd of British officers who were waiting seemed little concerned by any such possibility, and were as unconcerned as if it was a Cook's Tour and not a particularly

As I entered the hall I saw a crowd clustering round the notice-board to read a telegram which had just been suspended.

dangerous expedition—so dangerous that of the last army which went south, that of Hicks Pasha, hardly one single man was ever seen again. Only once did I see them really excited. I had returned to the hotel which was the general headquarters, and as I entered the hall I saw a crowd of them all clustering round the notice-board to read a telegram which had just been suspended. They were on the tiptoes of their spurred boots, with their necks outstretched, and every sign of quivering and eager interest. "Ah," thought I, "at last we have got through the hide of these impenetrable men. I suppose the Khalifa is coming down, horse, foot, and artillery, and that we are on the eve of a battle." I pushed my way in and thrust my head among all the bobbing sun-helmets. It was the account of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-race!

I was struck by the splendid zeal of everyone. It was an inspiration. Hickman had been full of combative plans all the way on the boat. When we arrived there was a message for him to go down to Keneh and buy camels. Here was a drop down for a man all on fire for action. "It is quite right," said he, when I condoled with him. "The force must have camels. I am the man to buy them. We all work for one end." Self-abnegation of this sort is general. The British officer at his best is really a splendid fellow, a large edition of the public schoolboy, with his cheery slang overlying a serious purpose which he would usually die rather than admit. I heard of three of them at rail-end, all doing essential work and all with a degree of fever on them which might well have excused them from work altogether. Every evening each of them dropped a dollar into a hat, they then all took their temperatures, and the highest got the pool.

Assouan was at the foot of the Cataract, which extends for some thirty miles, and everything had to be transhipped and taken on a narrow toy railway to be reloaded on fresh steamers at Shellal. It was a huge task, and I remember sympathizing with Captain Morgan, who with fatigue parties of Egyptians and chain gangs of convicts was pushing the stuff through. Morgan had sold me a horse once and was shy of me in consequence, but he soon saw that I bore no grudge. *Caveat emptor!* I already saw in him those qualities of organization which made him a real factor both in the Boer and in the European wars. He has just died (1923), a general and full of honours. I remember seeing the 7th Egyptians after a long, gruelling desert march working at those stores until they were so played out that it took four of them to raise a sixty-pound biscuit-box.

WITH THE PRESSMEN.

The big pressmen had now arrived—"Where the carcass is there shall the eagles," etc.—and I had easily made friends with them, so it was determined that we should all go on together. There were five of us who started out, Knight of the *Falcon* representing the *Times*, and looking not unlike a falcon himself. He was a great man, tall, muscular, famous yachtsman and treasure-seeker, traveller, fighter, and scholar. He had just left the French in Madagascar. Next came Scudamore of the *Daily News*, small, Celtic, mercurial, full of wit and go. He was a great purchaser of camels, which were, of course, all paid for by the paper, so that when the Editor of the *Daily News* heard of the Boer War his first comment was: "Well, thank God, there are no camels in South Africa." It was a study in Eastern ways to see Scudamore buying camels, and I learned from him how it is done. An Arab leads up the absurd-looking creature. You look depreciatingly at the beast, and you cannot take a better model than the creature's own expression as it looks at you. You ask how much is wanted for it. The owner says sixteen pounds. You then give a shriek of derision, sweep your arm across as if to wave him and his camel out of your sight for ever, and, turning with a whisk, you set off rapidly in the other direction. How far you go depends upon the price asked. If it is really very high you may not get back for your dinner. But as a rule a hundred yards or so meet the case, and you shape your course so as to reach the camel and its owner. You stop in front of them and look at them with a disinterested and surprised look to intimate that you wonder that they should still be loitering there. The Arab asks how much you will give. You answer eight pounds. Then it is his turn to scream, whisk round, and do his hundred yards, his absurd chattel with its hornpipey legs trotting along behind him. But he returns to say that he will take fourteen, and off you go again with a howl and a wave. So the bargain goes on, the circles continually shortening, until you have settled upon the middle price.

But it is only when you have bought your camel that the troubles begin. It is the strangest and most deceptive animal in the world. Its appearance is so staid and respectable that you cannot give it credit for the black villainy that lurks within. It approaches you with a mildly interested and superior expression, like a patrician lady in a Sunday-school. You feel that a pair of glasses at the end of a fan is the one thing lacking. Then it puts its lips gently

forward, with a far-away look in its eyes, and you have just time to say: "The pretty dear is going to kiss me," when two rows of frightful green teeth clash in front of you, and you give such a backward jump as you could never have hoped at your age to accomplish. When once the veil is dropped, anything more demoniacal than the face of a camel cannot be conceived. No kindness and no length of ownership seem to make them friendly. And yet you must make allowances for a creature which can carry six hundred pounds for twenty miles a day, and ask for no water and little food at the end of it.

This, however, is digression. The other pressmen were the naval historian of the Great War. Like myself, he was an amateur among professionals, and had to return within a given date to Cairo.

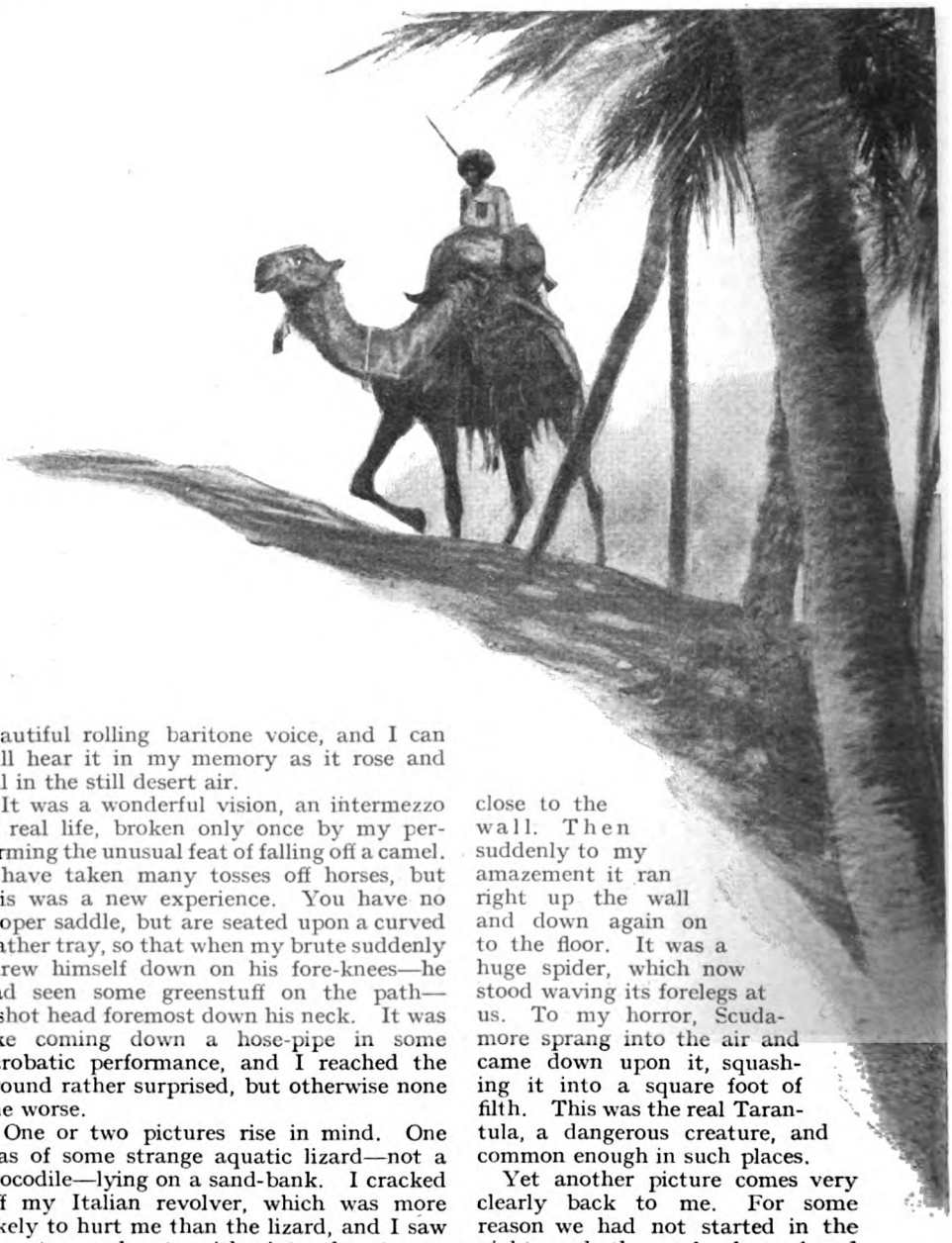
A LONG CAMEL RIDE.

As it was clear that nothing important could take place instantly we determined to do part of the journey by road. A force of cavalry was going up, and we were ordered to join them and use them as an escort, but we thought we would be happier on our own, and so we managed to lose the Egyptians. There was some risk in our lonely journey along the right bank of the river with our left flank quite unprotected, but, on the other hand, the dust of a great body of horsemen would be insufferable. Therefore we set forth one evening, mounted upon our camels, with baggage camels in attendance, and quite a retinue of servants. In four or five days we reached Korosko, where we got boats which took us to the frontier at Wady Halfa, while the camels and servants came on by land.

I shall never forget those days, or rather those nights, for we rose at two in the morning and our longest march was before or during the dawn. I am still haunted by that purple velvet sky, by those enormous and innumerable stars, by the half moon which moved slowly above us, while our camels with their noiseless tread seemed to bear us without effort through a wonderful dream-world. Scudamore had a

Beaman of the *Standard*, fresh from Constantinople, and almost an Eastern in his ways, and Julian Corbett, representing the *Pall Mall*, a gentle and amiable man who was destined later to be

You then give a shriek of derision, sweep your arm across as if to wave him and his camel out of your sight for ever, and set off rapidly in the opposite direction.

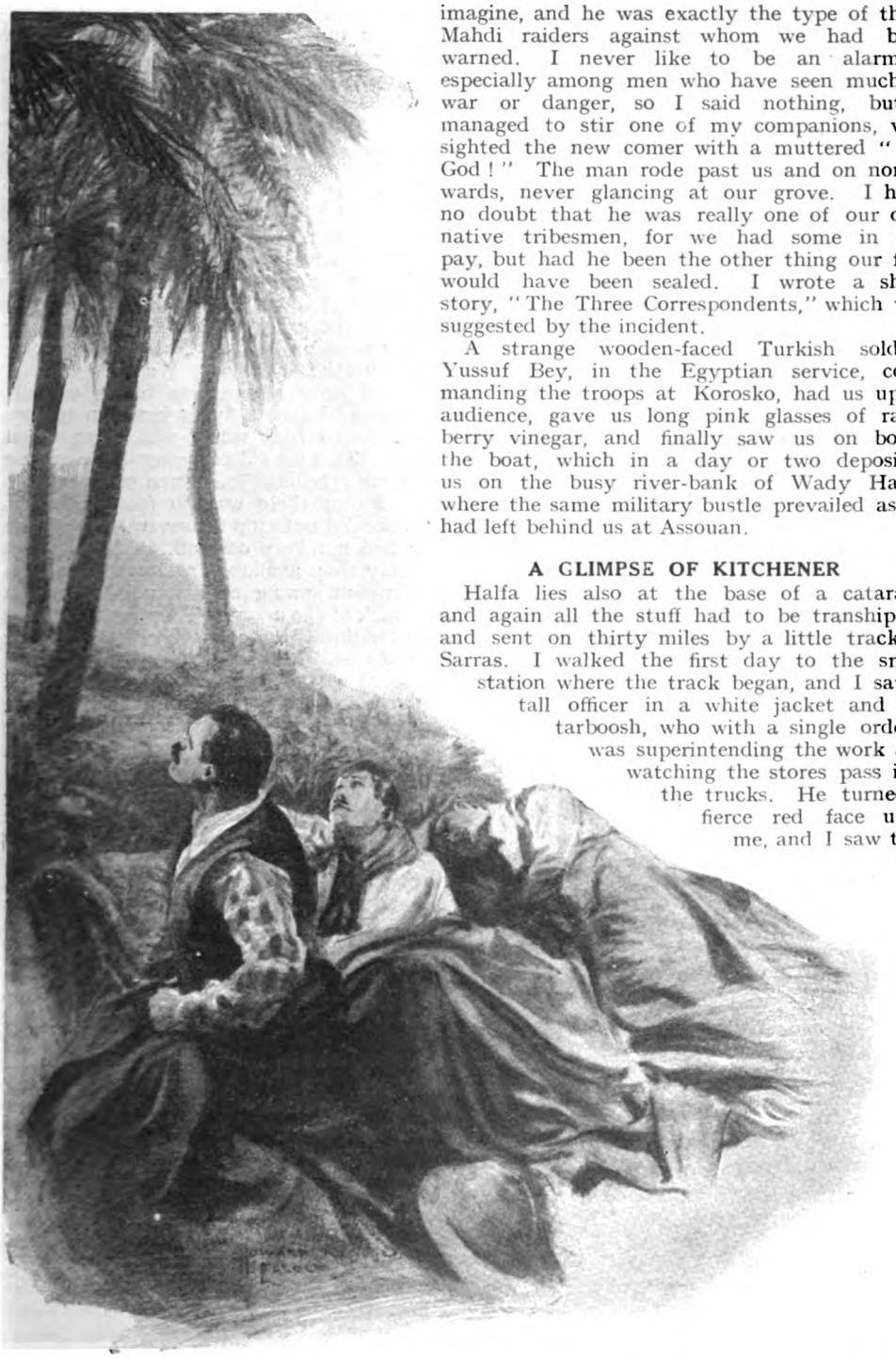


beautiful rolling baritone voice, and I can still hear it in my memory as it rose and fell in the still desert air.

It was a wonderful vision, an intermezzo of real life, broken only once by my performing the unusual feat of falling off a camel. I have taken many tosses off horses, but this was a new experience. You have no proper saddle, but are seated upon a curved leather tray, so that when my brute suddenly threw himself down on his fore-knees—he had seen some greenstuff on the path—I shot head foremost down his neck. It was like coming down a hose-pipe in some acrobatic performance, and I reached the ground rather surprised, but otherwise none the worse.

One or two pictures rise in mind. One was of some strange aquatic lizard—not a crocodile—lying on a sand-bank. I cracked off my Italian revolver, which was more likely to hurt me than the lizard, and I saw the strange beast writhe into the stream. Once again as I settled in my couch at night I saw a slug-like creature, with horned projections, in length about eighteen inches, which moved away and disappeared. It was a death-adder—the sort, perhaps, which took Cleopatra to her fathers. Then, again, we went into a ruined hut to see if we could sleep there. In the dim light of our candle we saw a creature which I thought was a mouse rush round and round the floor, close to the wall. Then suddenly to my amazement it ran right up the wall and down again on to the floor. It was a huge spider, which now stood waving its forelegs at us. To my horror, Scudamore sprang into the air and came down upon it, squashing it into a square foot of filth. This was the real Tarantula, a dangerous creature, and common enough in such places.

Yet another picture comes very clearly back to me. For some reason we had not started in the night, and the early dawn found us still resting in our small camp in a grove of palm trees near the path which led along the bank of the Nile. I awoke, and lying in my blankets I saw an amazing man riding along this path. He was a negroid Nubian, a huge, fierce, hollow-cheeked creature, with many silver ornaments upon him. A long rifle projected over his back and a sword hung from his side. A more sinister, barbaric figure one could not



imagine, and he was exactly the type of those Mahdi raiders against whom we had been warned. I never like to be an alarmist, especially among men who have seen much of war or danger, so I said nothing, but I managed to stir one of my companions, who sighted the new comer with a muttered "My God!" The man rode past us and on northwards, never glancing at our grove. I have no doubt that he was really one of our own native tribesmen, for we had some in our pay, but had he been the other thing our fate would have been sealed. I wrote a short story, "The Three Correspondents," which was suggested by the incident.

A strange wooden-faced Turkish soldier, Yussuf Bey, in the Egyptian service, commanding the troops at Korosko, had us up in audience, gave us long pink glasses of raspberry vinegar, and finally saw us on board the boat, which in a day or two deposited us on the busy river-bank of Wady Halfa, where the same military bustle prevailed as we had left behind us at Assouan.

A GLIMPSE OF KITCHENER

Halfa lies also at the base of a cataract, and again all the stuff had to be transhipped and sent on thirty miles by a little track to Sarras. I walked the first day to the small station where the track began, and I saw a tall officer in a white jacket and red tarboosh, who with a single orderly was superintending the work and watching the stores pass into the trucks. He turned a fierce red face upon me, and I saw that

I awoke, and lying in my blankets I saw an amazing man riding along. A rifle projected over his back and a sword hung from his side.

it was Kitchener himself, the Commander of the whole army. It was characteristic of the man that he did not leave such vital things to chance, or to the assurance of some subordinate, but that he made sure so far as he could with his own eyes that he really had the tools for the job that lay before him. Learning who I was—we had met once before on the racecourse at Cairo—he asked me to dinner in his tent that night, when he discussed the coming campaign with great frankness. I remember that his chief of staff —Drage, I think, was the name—sat beside me and was so completely played out that he fell fast asleep between every course. I remember also the amused smile with which Kitchener regarded him. You had to go all out when you served such a master.

One new acquaintance whom I made in those days was Herbert Gwynne, a newly-fledged war correspondent, acting, if I remember right, for the *Daily Chronicle*. I saw that he had much in him. When I heard of him next he was Reuter's man in the Boer War, and not very long afterwards he had become editor of the *Morning Post*, where he now is. Those days in Halfa were the beginning of a friendship of thirty years, none the less real because we are both too busy to meet. One of the joys of the hereafter is, I think, that we have time to cultivate our friends.

A STRANGE MEETING.

I was friendly also with a very small but gallant officer, one Anley, who had just joined the Egyptian Army. His career was beginning, and I foresaw that he would rise, but would have been very surprised had I known how we would meet again. I was standing in the ranks by the roadside as a private of Volunteers in the Great War, when a red-tabbed, brass-hatted general passed. He looked along our ranks, his gaze fastened on me, and lo! it was Anley. Surprised out of all military etiquette, he smiled and nodded. What is a private in the ranks to do when a general smiles and nods? He can't formally stand to attention or salute. I fear that what I did was to close and then open my left eye. That was how I learned that my Egyptian captain was now a war brigadier.

We pushed on to Sarras, and had a glimpse of the actual outpost of civilization, all sandbags and barbed wire, for there was a Mahdi post at no distance up the river. It was wonderful to look south from there and to see distant peaks said to be in Dongola, with nothing but savagery and murder lying between. There was a whiff of real war in the little fortress, but no sign of any actual advance.

Indeed, I had the assurance of Kitchener himself that there was no use my waiting, and that nothing could possibly happen until the camels were collected—many thousands of them. I contributed my own beast to the army's need, since I had no further need of it, and Corbett and I prepared to take our leave. We were warned that our only course was to be on the look-out and take a flying jump on to any empty cargo boat which was going down stream. This we did one morning, carrying our scanty belongings. Once on board we learned that there was no food and that the boat did not stop for several days. The rope had not been cast off, so I rushed to the only shop available, a Greek store of a type which sprang up like mushrooms on the track of the army. They were sold out save for tinned apricots, of which I bought several tins. I rushed back and scrambled on board as the boat cast off. I managed to get some Arab bread from the boatmen, and that with the apricots served us all the way. I never wish to see a tinned apricot again so long as I live. I associate their cloying sweetness with Rousseau's "Confessions," a French edition of which came somehow into my hands and was my only reading till I saw Assouan once more. Rousseau also I never wish to read again.

So that was the end of our frontier adventure. We had been on the edge of war, but not in it. It was disappointing, but it was late in April before I reached Cairo, and the heat was already becoming too much for an invalid. A week later we were in London, and I remember that, as I sat as a guest at the Royal Academy Banquet on May 1st of that year, I saw upon my wrists the ragged little ulcers where the poisonous jiggers which had burrowed into my skin while I lay upon the banks of the Nile were hatching out their eggs under the august roof of Burlington House.

CHAPTER XII.

AN INTERLUDE OF PEACE.

WHEN we returned to England I found that the house in which we hoped that my wife's cure would be completed was not yet ready. It was a considerable mansion, planned upon a large scale, so that it was not surprising that it had taken some time to build. We were compelled to take a furnished house at Haslemere until the early

months of 1897, when we moved up to Moorlands, a boarding-house on Hindhead close to the site of my building. There we spent some happy and busy months until the house was ready in the summer. I had taken up riding, and, though I was never a great horseman, I was able from that time onwards to get a good deal of health and pleasure out of it, for in that woody, heathy country there are beautiful rides in every direction, and the hunting, in which I joined, was at least picturesque. About June we moved into the new house, which I called Undershaw—a new word, I think, and yet one which described it exactly in good Anglo-Saxon, since it stood under a hanging grove of trees.

I saw that it was Kitchener himself.

"RODNEY STONE."

I have said little during these years spent in the quest of health concerning my literary production. The chief book which I had written since "The Refugees" was a study of the Regency with its bucks and prize-fighters. I had always a weakness for the old fighting men and for the lore of the prize-ring, and I indulged it in "Rodney Stone." At that time boxing had not gained the popular vogue which I have been told that this very book first initiated, and I can never forget the surprise of Sir George Newnes when he found out what the new serial was about. "Why that subject of all subjects upon earth?" he cried. However, I think that the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE found that I had not chosen badly, and the book is one which has held a permanent place as a picture of those wild old days. I wrote a considerable number of short tales during those years, and finally, in 1898, a domestic study, "A Duet," which was an attempt at quite a different form of literature—a picture in still life, as it were. It was partly imaginative, and partly founded upon early experiences of my own and of friends. It led, I remember, to a public bickering with a man who had done good work as a critic, the late Sir W. Robertson Nicoll. He took exception to some passage in the book, which he had every right to do. But he wrote at that time for six or seven papers, under different *noms de plume*, so that it appeared as if a number of critics were all condemning me when it was really only one. I thought I had a grievance, and said so with such vehemence that he stated that he did not know whether to answer me in print or in the law courts. However, it all blew over, and we became very good friends. Another book of those days was "Uncle Bernac," which I never felt to be satisfactory, though I venture to claim that the two chapters which portray Napoleon give a clearer picture of him than many a long book has done, which is natural enough since they are themselves the quintessence of a score of books.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY POLITICAL ADVENTURES.

I HAVE twice stood for Parliament, though if anyone were to ask me my real reasons for doing so I should find it difficult to give them an intelligible answer. It certainly was from no burning desire to join that august assembly, for in each case I deliberately contested seats which every expert considered to be impossible; and though on one occasion I very nearly proved the experts to be wrong, my action is none the less a sign that I had no burning desire to be at the head of the poll, for other and easier seats had been offered me. In the case of Central Edinburgh, for which I stood in the 1900 election, there may have been some sentimental call, for it was the section of the city where I was educated and where much of my boyhood was spent. It was said to be the premier Radical stronghold of Scotland, and to carry it would be a fine exploit, for though I was a good deal of a Radical myself in many ways, I knew that it would be a national disgrace, and possibly an Imperial disaster, if we did not carry the Boer War to complete success, and that was the real issue before the electors.

I believe that Providence one way or another gets a man's full powers out of him, but that it is essential that the man himself should co-operate to the extent of putting himself in the way of achievement. Give yourself the chance always. If it is so fated you will win through. If your path lies elsewhere, then you have got your sign through your failure. But do not put yourself in the position later in life of looking back and saying, "Perhaps I might have had a career there had I tried." Deep in my bones I felt that I was on earth for some big purpose, and it was only by trying that I could tell that the purpose was not political, though I could never imagine myself as fettered to a party or as thinking that all virtues lay with one set of men.

My political work was not wasted. I stood in the two most heckling constituencies in Scotland, and through that odious and much-abused custom I gained a coolness on the platform and a disregard for interruption and clamour which have stood me in good stead since. Indeed, I hold that it was to fashion me more perfectly for my ultimate work that I was twice passed through this furnace. I remember that once at Hawick my soldier brother came to see how I was getting on, and was struck by the effect which I had upon my audiences. "It would be strange, Arthur," said he, "if your real career should prove to be political and not literary."

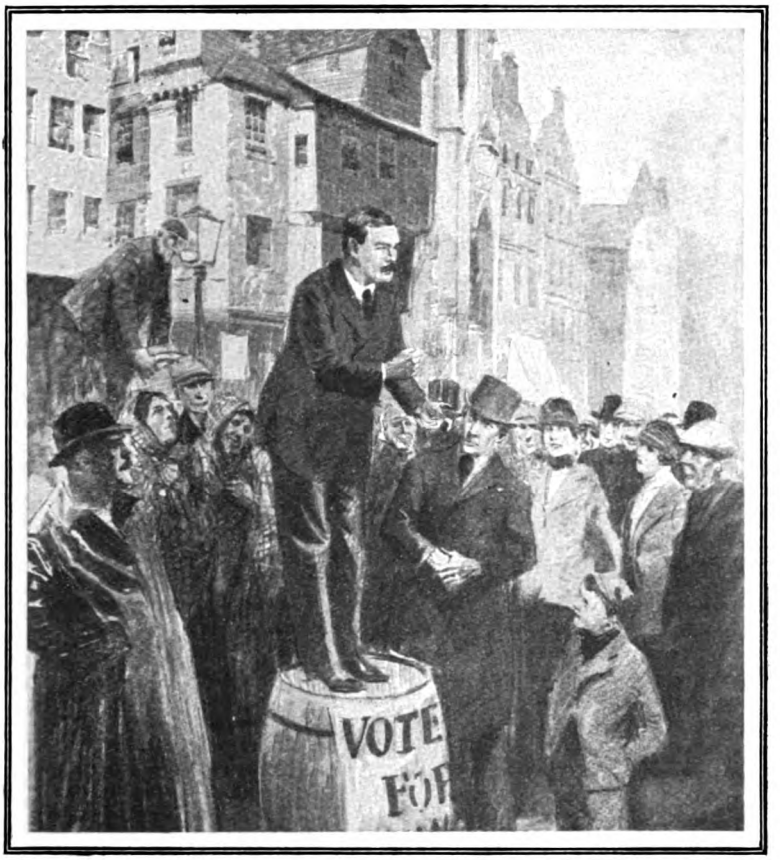
"It will be neither. It will be religious," said I.

Then we looked at each other in surprise and both burst out laughing. The answer seemed quite absurd and pointless, for no remote possibility of such a thing suggested itself. It was a curious example of that unconscious power of prophecy which is latent within us.

PREPARING AN ELECTION ADDRESS.

I had hardly landed from South Africa when I flung myself into the Edinburgh contest. Mr. Cranston, later Sir Robert Cranston, a well-known citizen, was my chairman. When I arrived a small meeting was held, and I, a weary man, listened while it was gravely debated, with much weighing of pros and cons, what my view was to be on each of the vital questions. Finally it was all settled to their satisfaction and written down, preparatory to forming the election address. I had listened with some amusement, and when it was all over I said: "Gentlemen, may I ask who is going to honour these promises that you are making?" "Why, you, of course," said they. "Then I think it would be better if I made them," said I, and, crumpling up their document, I picked up a pen and wrote out my own views and my own address. It was well received and would have won the election against enormous odds—some thousands of votes at the last trial—were it not for a very unexpected intervention.

Those who remember the election will bear me out that it was an exciting affair. My opponent was a Mr. Brown, a member of Nelson's, publishing firm, which had large works in the constituency. I was fresh from the scene of war and overflowing with zeal to help the Army, so I spared myself in no way. I spoke from barrels in the street or any other pedestal I cou'd find, holding many wayside meetings besides my big meetings in the evening, which were always crowded and uproarious. There was nothing which I could have done and did not do. My opponent was not formidable, but I had against me an overwhelming party machine with its registered lists and record of unbroken victory. It is no light matter to change the vote of a Scotsman, and many of them would as soon think of changing their religion. One



I spoke from barrels in the street or any other pedestal I could find.

serious mischance occurred. I was determined to do and say nothing which I did not heartily mean, and this attitude united Ireland, North and South, for the first time in history. The Irish vote was considerable, so that this was important. The South quarrelled with me because, though I favoured some devolution, I was not yet converted to Home Rule. The North was angry because I was in favour of a Catholic University for Dublin. So I had no votes from Ireland.

When I went down to hold a meeting in a hall in the Cowgate, which is the Irish quarter, I was told that it had been arranged to break my platform up. This seems to have been true, but fortunately I got on good human terms with my audience, and indeed moved many of them to tears by telling them of the meeting between the two battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Ladysmith. So it happened that when a sinister-looking figure, a local horse-slaughterer, appeared on the edge of the stage, he was received in silence. He moved slowly across and said something about free speech. I felt that if I or my people were violent there would be a riot, so I simply said: "Trot along, sonny, trot along!" He did trot along and disappeared on the other side of the stage. After the transit of this sinister star, and my temporary eclipse, all went well to the end.

AN ELEVENTH-HOUR ATTACK

As the day of the election approached it became more and more evident that I was getting dangerous, but I was knocked out—fortunately for myself, as I now discern—by a curious interference. There was an Evangelical named Potts, or Potter, living at Dunfermline who thought it his special mission in life to keep Roman Catholic candidates out of Parliament. Therefore at the eleventh hour, the very night before the voting, the whole district was placarded with big sheets to say that I was a Roman Catholic, that I had been educated by Jesuits, and, in fact, that my whole candidature was an attack upon

Kirk and Covenant and Lesser Catechism and everything dear to the Scottish heart. It was very cleverly done, and of course this man alone could not have paid the expenses, though I cannot believe that Mr. Brown knew anything of the matter. My unhappy supporters saw crowds of workmen reading these absurd placards and calling out: "I've done with him!" As it was I very narrowly missed the seat, being only beaten by a few hundred votes. The question of an appeal came along, but the thing was so clever that it really was difficult to handle, since it was true enough that I had been educated by Jesuits and yet absurdly untrue that this education influenced my present frame of mind. Therefore we had to leave it alone.

Looking back I am inclined to look upon Mr. Potter—if that was his name—as one of the great benefactors of my life. He altered the points at the last moment and prevented me from being shunted on to a side line which would perhaps have taken me to a dead end. I could never have been a party man, and there seems no place under our system for anyone else. At the moment I was a little sore, and I wrote a letter to the *Scotsman* which defined my religious position as it was then, and caused, I believe, no little comment. I had the following letter from Sir John Boraston, who was the party organizer. The first sentence refers to the possibility of lodging a legal protest:—

"6, *Great George Street,*
"*Westminster, London, S.W.*
"18*th October,* 1900.

"*Dear Dr. Doyle,*—

"*Probably your Edinburgh advisers are right, but it is undoubtedly a misfortune that the perpetrators of attacks such as that which was made upon you should be allowed to go unpunished.*

"*Your fight was indeed a phenomenal one, and you have the consolation of knowing that if you did not actually win a seat for yourself, you did materially contribute to the Liberal-Unionist victories in two other Edinburgh constituencies. This is generally admitted.*

"*I am sure you will feel that your first entry into active political life promises a full measure of success at no distant date, and I hope I may see you again before long to talk matters over.*

"*Yours very truly,*
(*sgd.*) "JOHN BORASTON."

STANDING FOR "THE BORDER BURGHS."

I had no further urge to try political adventures, but when the Tariff Reform election of 1905 came round I felt that I should make some sacrifice for the faith that was in me. Mr. "Tommy" Shaw, as he was called—now Lord Shaw—was one of the most energetic Radicals in Scotland, and was reputed to be most firmly established in his seat, which was called "The Border Burghs," consisting of the small towns of Hawick, Galashiels, and Selkirk, all of them engaged in the woollen trade, and all of them hard hit by German competition. It seemed to me that if there was a good field anywhere for Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's views on a protective tariff it should be there, where an open market had caused such distress and loss. My reasoning was sound enough, but I had not reckoned upon the innate conservatism of the Scottish character, which cannot readjust its general principles to meet the particular case—a noble trait but occasionally an unpractical one. Party politics are not a divine law, but simply a means to an end, which must adjust itself as the end varies.

This time I really expended a good deal of work as well as money upon the attempt, for if you stand for others besides yourself you have no choice but to work up to the last pound of steam. I might have added my neck to the other things which I risked, for in an endeavour to get into comradeship with the people I joined in what is known as the "common-riding" at Hawick, where a general holiday is proclaimed while the bounds of the common are ridden over and defined. Part of the proceedings was that each mounted man had to gallop full split down the high road over a measured course of half a mile or so, the burghers lining the way and helping one by waving sticks and umbrellas.

I was mounted on a hunter which I had never seen before, and which was full of spirit. Fortunately this monstrous road performance came off late in the afternoon, and I had taken some of the spirit out of him by our ride round the common. I do not profess to be a great horseman, and I certainly nearly made the acquaintance of the Hawick turnpike. Sooner or later someone will be killed at that game, and horses must be lamed every year. Afterwards an interminable ballad was recited with a sort of jingling chorus to which all who are near the reciter keep time with their feet. As it would seem unsympathetic not to join I also kept time with the rhythm, and was amused and amazed when I got back to London to see in the papers that I had danced a hornpipe in public before the electors. Altogether I had no desire to face another Hawick common-riding.

The trouble in dealing with a three-town constituency, each town very jealous of the other, is that whatever you do has to be

done thrice or you give offence. I was, therefore, heartily sick of the preparation, and only too pleased when the actual election came off. I thought then, and I think now, that a sliding tariff, if only as an instrument for bargaining, would be altogether to our interest in this country, and would possibly cause some of our rivals to cease closing their markets to us while

Each man had to gallop full split down the high road, the burghers lining the way.

they freely use the open market which we present. I still think that Chamberlain's whole scheme was an admirable one, and that it was defeated by a campaign of misrepresentation and actual lying, in which Chinese labour and dear food played the chief part. I stood among the ruins of a dismantled factory in the Border Burghs and I showed how it had been destroyed by German competition, and how while we let their goods in free they were levying taxes on ours and spending the money so gained upon warships with which we might some day have to reckon. The answer to my arguments consisted largely of coloured cartoons of Chinamen working in chains in the mines of the Transvaal, and other nonsense of the sort. I worked very hard, so hard that on the last night of the election I addressed meetings in each of the three towns, which, as they are separated by many miles of hilly roads, is a feat never done, I understand, before or since. However, it was of no avail and I was beaten, though I believe I am right in saying that the party showed a less decrease of vote than in any constituency in Scotland. The thing which annoyed me most about the election was that my opponent, Tommy Shaw, only appeared once, so far as I remember, in the constituency, and did everything by deputy, so that I found myself like a boxer who is punching his rival's second instead of himself all the time. I had the melancholy satisfaction of noting that the Radical chairman, who was so engrossed in the wrongs of Chinamen in the Transvaal, went into liquidation within a few months, giving as his reason the pressure of foreign competition in the woollen trade.

THE ART OF HECKLING.

It is a vile business, this electioneering, though no doubt it is chastening in its effect. They say that mud-baths are healthy and purifying, and I can compare it to nothing else. This applies particularly, I think, to Scotland, where the art of heckling has been carried to extremes. This asking of questions was an excellent thing so long as it was honest in its desire to know the candidate's opinion upon a public measure. But the honest questions are the exception,

and the unfortunate man is baited by all sorts of senseless trick questions from mischievous and irresponsible persons, which are designed to annoy him and make him seem foolish or ignorant. Some reform is badly needed in this matter. Often after a speech of an hour I had an hour of questions, one more absurd than another. The Press records will show, I hope, that I held my own, for I knew my subject well, and by this time I had had a good schooling on the platform. Sometimes I countered heavily. I remember one robust individual coming down with a carefully-prepared question which he shouted from the back of the hall. I had been speaking of retaliation in commercial tariffs, and his question was: "Mister Candidate, how do you reconcile retaliation with the Sermon on the Mount?" I answered: "We cannot in life always reach the highest ideals. Have *you* sold all and given to the poor?" The man was locally famous as having done nothing of the sort, and there was a howl of delight at my answer, which fairly drove him out of the hall.

There is a peculiar dry Scottish wit which is very effective when you get it on your side. I remember one solemn person who had a loaf on the end of a pole which he protruded towards me, as if it were a death's head, from the side box of the theatre in which I spoke. The implication was, I suppose, that I would raise the price of bread. It was difficult to ignore the thing and yet puzzling how to meet it, but one of my people in broad Doric cried: "Tak it hame and eat it!" which quite spoilt the effect. Usually these interpolations are delivered in a dreamy impersonal sort of voice. When, in talking of the Transvaal War, I said with some passion: "Who is going to pay for this war?" a seedy-looking person standing against the side wall said, "I'm no carin'!" which made both me and the audience laugh.

FACING HOSTILE AUDIENCES.

The Radicals used to attend my meetings in great numbers, so that they were usually hostile audiences which I addressed. Since their own candidate held hardly any meetings I was the only fun to be had. Before the meeting the packed house would indulge in cries and counter-cries, with rival songs and slogans, so that as I approached the building it sounded like feeding-time at the Zoo. My heart often sank within me as I listened to the uproar, and I would ask myself what on earth I meant by placing myself in such a position. Once on the platform, however, my fighting blood warmed up, and I did not quail before any clamour. It was all a great education for the future, though I did not realize it at the time, but followed blindly where some strange inward instinct led me on. What tired me most were the personal liberties taken by vulgar people, which is a very different thing from poor people, whom I usually find to be very delicate in their feelings. I take a liberty with no man, and there is something in me which rises up in anger if any man takes a liberty with me. A candidate cannot say all he thinks on this matter or his party may suffer. I was always on my guard lest I should give offence in this way, and I well remember how on one occasion I stood during a three days' campaign a good many indignities with exemplary patience. I was on edge, however, and, as luck would have it, at the very last moment, as I stood on the platform waiting for the London train, one of my own people, an exuberant young bounder, came up with a loud familiar greeting and squeezed my right hand until my signet-ring nearly cut me. It opened the sluice, and out came a torrent of whaler language which I had hoped that I had long ago forgotten. The blast seemed to blow him bodily across the platform, and formed a strange farewell to my supporters.

Thus ended my career in politics. I could say with my friend Kendrick Bangs: "The electors have returned me—to the bosom of my family." A very pleasant constituency it is. I had now thoroughly explored that path, and had assured myself that my life's journey did not lie along it. And yet I was deeply convinced that big public service was waiting for me somewhere. One likes to feel that one has some small practical influence upon the affairs of one's time, but I encourage myself by the thought that though I have not been a public man, yet my utterances in several pamphlets and numerous letters in the Press may have had more weight with the public since I was disassociated from any political interest which could sway my judgment.

(Next month's instalment will be found exceptionally interesting, as it contains Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's reminiscences of many of the notable people he has met, including Mr. Lloyd George, President Roosevelt, Lord Balfour, Mr. Asquith, Lord Haldane, Mr. George Meredith, Mr Rudyard Kipling, Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Bernard Shaw, etc., etc.)

THE WRONG NUMBER

BY

TORQUIL MACLEOD

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

FOR quite three minutes the telephone had been ringing—nasty peremptory rings, the sort of jerky none-of-your-nonsense-now rings that appear to indicate that the young woman at the Exchange is most distinctly not in a mood to be trifled with—before Richard Curtice, rolling over and landing a vicious short-arm punch on the solar plexus of the top pillow he had pushed away in the night, stretched out a reluctant hand and took the receiver off the hook.

"Hullo!" he said, in the rasping early morning tones of any rightly constituted young man awakened in this particularly offensive manner from his beauty sleep; "Hullo!—Hull——"

"Hullo yourself!" came over the wire in the cheeriest of feminine voices imaginable—the sort of voice that speaks of youth, and peaches and cream, a great zest for living, and a real capacity for loving. "How are you this morning, Dickie?"

To say that Curtice was astonished is to put it mildly, but, moistening his lips with his tongue and hurriedly putting his sleep-

tousled hair into some sort of order with his disengaged hand, he rose to the occasion like a soldier and a gentleman.

"I—ah—am all right, thanks," he said. "How are you?"

"What a question!" said the voice. "I am, of course, the happiest girl in the whole world."

Curtice sat bolt upright in bed. "By gad, yes!" he said, "I believe you are—at any rate you sound like it."

"Well, why not?" came the reply. "Haven't I cause to be?"

"Search me!" said Curtice, inelegantly, to himself, but aloud he said, rather feebly, as he would have been the first to admit, "Oh—er—rather. By Jove, yes—I mean, it's nice of you to say so."

A low ripple of delightful laughter came over the wire—"The sort of laugh that gets me in once," said Curtice to himself—then, "Dick," said the young voice, in positively cooing accents, "Dickie—*dear!*"

Curtice's mouth by this time was more than a little dry, but he did his best to get the right tones into his voice, though he found it rather difficult to choose the words. "Yes," he said, softly, "yes—dearest?"

"That wasn't what you called me last night," said the voice, and there was a distinct note of disappointment in its tones.

"No," said Curtice, lying bravely, "but that was—er—last night, you see. I mean—well, after all, a chap's got to work up to that sort of thing, and before breakfast, you know——"

"*Before breakfast!*" said the voice, in horrified accents. "Oh, Dickie, and you told me you always breakfasted at a quarter to eight——"

"Oh, I do," said Curtice, hurriedly, "but to-day, don't you know—I mean, after last night, and all that—what?"

"Well, I suppose it was a little disturbing," said the voice in forgiving tones. "*I* hardly slept a wink all night."

"Oh, you poor thing!" said Curtice, hurriedly. "By gad, you know, that's too bad—not even one tiny little winkie-wink?"

"Oh, Dickie, you are silly!" came the voice, deliciously. "You sound so funny this morning, somehow. So—so frivolous. Different. I wish I could see you through the telephone."

Curtice convulsively pulled the bedclothes up around his neck and held them there with an agonized clutch.

"Oh, by Jove," he said, hurriedly, "that would never do, you know! I—I'm in bed." The words slipped out and he bit his lip in vexation.

"Dickie!" said the voice reprovingly. "In bed! What *are* you talking about? How can you be in bed when you're talking to me on the telephone?"

Curtice, very red and confused, floundered into an attempt at explanation.

"It's one of those—er—bedside telephones, you know—Extensions, they call them," he said. "Just got it in—jolly little things; so handy, don't you know, except when they wake you up early in the morning as——"

"As yours has done this morning, I suppose you mean?" said the voice, in offended tones. "I don't think that's very polite of you, Dickie. And if you call nine o'clock early——"

"Oh, come, I say," said Curtice, in his agitation throwing off the bedclothes, assuming a sitting position on the edge of the bed, and speaking very earnestly into the mouthpiece. "Don't take it like that, you know. You've got it all wrong, I assure you. What I meant was——"

"Oh, that's all right, Dickie," was the disconcerting reply. "Don't bother to explain now, as it seems so difficult. *Tell me all about it at lunch.*"

CURTICE'S jaw dropped; so—very nearly—also did the receiver. His eyes goggled. His throat suddenly became very dry. Several times he opened his mouth and shut it again. Altogether he presented a pitiable spectacle. After all, it was a bit of a dilemma, wasn't it? For obviously, you see, they were lunching together. But where? Was it at her house, or was she supposed to be lunching at a restaurant with him? If it was at the former, how could he possibly keep the engagement—the other fellow's engagement—when plainly it would make things awkward for her with her people? The thing, of course, was impossible, but, still, he must see her—somehow. If, on the other hand, it was at a restaurant, there was just a chance that it might be contrived. But even here there was a difficulty—how should he know her, how—— Oh, hang these speculations! They could wait, while she probably wouldn't if he didn't speak up quickly. He noticed that the telephone mouthpiece was trembling violently in his hand as he spoke into it.

"By Jove, yes. Lunch," he heard himself saying in husky tones that he hardly recognized as his own. "Of course, I'll tell you all about it then. Claridge's, I think we said—at one-thirty, what?"

"We didn't say anything of the kind, really," said the voice, with a little gurgle of satisfaction, "but that will do very nicely. *Au 'voir*, Dickie."

"Oh, but look here, I say"—in his agitation Curtice raised his voice almost to a thin scream. "How shall I—I mean,

how shall we—er, that is, I say, old thing, what shall you be wearing ? "

A clear laugh—oh, such a laugh !—rang through the telephone.

" Really, Dickie," said the voice, ' you're *quite* mad this morning, I think. What shall I be wearing ? I never heard anything so silly in all my life."

And on the instant the telephone had become dead. She had replaced the receiver.

FOR reasons of discretion one passes over the language used by Curtice when he found himself " rung off " in this disconcerting manner, and for artistic reasons one omits his highly technical telephone conversation with the *maître d'hôtel* at Claridge's, whom he shortly afterwards rang up for the purpose of ordering a very special luncheon for two—Curtice was by way of being an artist in food—and reserving a secluded table—you must have seen it many times, but I shall not tell you which one it is—also for two. But I must give you the concluding words of that conversation, which were : " That is all very satisfactory, thanks. Yes, one thirty—but, *hey !* hold hard ! " he added, quickly, as an afterthought, " don't put any flowers on the table. I shall send my own."

It was just after he had chosen those flowers in his favourite Bond Street florists' and given orders for them to be sent up to Claridge's at once that he stepped blithely out into the street and almost ran plump into the arms of jolly old Lady Tremayne, who was accompanied by quite the most fascinating-looking thing in the way of girls that Curtice ever remembered to have clapped eyes upon.

" My dear Richard," said Lady Tremayne, " Heaven has providentially almost precipitated you into my arms. Lucky for me, lucky for you. I can now get into a taxi out of this abominable heat, which will please me, and you can take Helen here —this is Captain Curtice, darling—on to Claridge's, where she is lunching, which will amuse both of you, no doubt."

And, independent and unconventional as ever, she promptly wobbled her parasol decisively at a " crawling " taxicab, into which she as promptly disappeared, and was whirled away in the direction of home and Piccadilly.

" Wonderful woman, Lady Tremayne," said Curtice, as he fell into step beside his fair companion for the leisurely saunter towards Brook Street—and Claridge's.

" A darling," breathed his companion, in tones which strangely stirred his pulses. " The kindest thing in the world."

" Yes," said Curtice, and added, most unaccountably for him, " but Fate also is kind."

" NOW, whom shall I find for you ? " he asked, a little later, when they stepped from Brook Street into the grateful coolness of the great hotel. " Someone I know, I expect ? "

Helen looked just a trifle embarrassed. Curtice didn't appear to notice it—he was too occupied in drinking in her radiant beauty and listening to the cool tones of her voice—although possibly it would have been quite obvious to observant persons like ourselves.

" I—I'm afraid I'm rather early," said Helen, with a little blush. " I'll just sit down and wait awhile. It was so kind of you to bring me, Captain Curtice." And she smiled in pretty dismissal.

But Curtice was not so easily to be dismissed. " But look here," he said. " I say, of course I can't leave you here like this. I must stand by till your people turn up."

Helen looked more than ever embarrassed. " Oh," she said, " but how absurd ! One is quite all right—here. And, besides," she added, " you must have your own luncheon engagement ? "

" By Jove, yes," said Curtice, with a start, as if he had just remembered it, " so I have. But that's all right—I'm lunching here, too."

Helen gave him a quick glance. " But how amusing ! " she said, and added with gentle urgency, " Still, your own guests——"

" Oh, I'm a bit early, too," he added, " but, in any case, she—that is to say, they—I mean—er——" he concluded, lamely, " my little affair doesn't matter a bit, you know."

Maybe it was some fifteen minutes later that Helen, with a funny little laugh, said, " No sign of your people yet, Captain Curtice ? "

" No," said he, " appears not. Nor of yours, either ? " he added, solicitously.

" No," said Helen.

" Queer," said Curtice.

Helen stole another of those quick glances at him from under her long lids.

" No," she said, looking down demurely, " it's not really so very queer. As a matter of fact "—again there was the faintest raising of her lovely eyes to his face—" I know it will sound very strange to you, but the truth is I—I'm not lunching here at all."

Curtice tried hard to conceal his amazement, but it was not a very great success.

" Not lunching here ! " he said, in puzzled tones.

Helen shook her head. "No," she said. "I merely told Lady Tremayne that."

Curtice rose hastily to his feet. "I see," he said. "Upon my word, you must think me an ass." And he held out his hand in apology and farewell.

"Oh," said Helen, flushing hotly, as the thought that seemed to be in his mind became plain to her, "believe me, Captain Curtice, it—it isn't what you think. I merely—I—oh, I can't very well explain."

Curtice sat down again promptly. "Then," he said, briskly, "may I venture to hope that you will do me the honour of lunching with me?"

Helen looked pleased, but more than a little puzzled. "But," she said, "your guests?"

"I haven't any," said Curtice. "I merely made that story up on the spur of the moment."

Unfortunately, just at this moment the *maître d'hôtel*, who had been looking anxiously for Curtice, came up, and, with a profound bow, "Your table, sir," he said, "is ready."

Helen raised steady questioning eyes to the face of Curtice, and was not surprised to notice that he appeared to be a little taken aback.

"I—I'm sorry," he said, "that I seemed to lie to you just now, but the fact is, I *have* a table here—I often have—just in case I want to drop in for a bit of lunch, you know. Please," he added, looking at her entreatingly. "*Please!*"

Helen rose, and, preceded by the *maître d'hôtel*, they made their way to Curtice's discreet table in the corner—that little table with its special floral decorations and its covers for two—facts which, you may be sure, were not lost upon the observant eyes of Helen.

IT was when they were sipping their liqueurs that Helen—you had only to look at her eyes to see that she was a woman of courage—reverted to an episode which both had steadfastly ignored throughout a rapturous meal.

"There is," she said, in a low, tremulous voice, "something I must tell you."

Curtice raised a protesting hand. "No," he said, firmly. "No."

"Yes," said Helen, just as firmly. "I couldn't possibly allow you to think—what you must think."

"I don't think anything at all," said Curtice, quickly, "except——"

It was Helen's turn to raise her hand. "You *must* say that, of course," she said, "but, equally, I must tell you the truth. My sister," she went on, "has just become engaged to Captain Charteris——"

"What!" said Curtice, quickly. "Dickie Charteris?"

Helen nodded. "Yes," she said. "Last night it happened. And when Hilda told me this morning, I—Dick and I are such old friends, you see—I rang him up on the telephone—oh, just for a rag—to pretend that I was Hilda."

"I see," said Curtice; "but really, I can't see what——"

"Wait," said Helen. "An extraordinary thing happened. I must have been put on to the wrong number, for a strange man answered——"

Curtice leant forward across the table in eager interest.

"A strange man answered?" he said, slowly.

"Yes," said Helen. "I knew it as soon as he had spoken a couple of sentences. But I—I kept it up—pretending that I was Hilda, I mean, and—and——"

"He asked you to lunch with him here?" said Curtice, quickly.

Helen, her face very flushed now, bowed her lovely head in shamed assent.

"And," said Curtice, almost fiercely, "*you were going to?*"

"No," said Helen, "nothing of the kind. How dare you think it! B-but," she added, "he sounded so nice on the telephone that I thought—I thought——"

"I see," said Curtice; "you thought you'd just have a peep at him—for curiosity?"

"Yes," said Helen, near to tears. "Horrible, wasn't it?"

"No," said Curtice, decidedly. "Lovely!—*darling.*"

Helen gave a little gasp of astonishment and grew very, very pale.

"*Oh!*" she said. "Then you knew it was me from the very moment we met?"

"Yes," said Curtice, "of course I did, my dear."

"B-but," faltered Helen, "I don't quite understand. You had never seen me before, and you stumbled upon Lady Tremayne and myself quite by accident——"

"A-ah!" said Curtice, with that aren't-I-a-dashed-clever-fellow air we all know so well. "A-ah! but *was* it an accident?"

"Oh!" said Helen. "You don't mean to say that she—you—that you had arranged the meeting between you?"

There was a certain amount of self-satisfaction in Curtice's promptly-nodded affirmative.

"But," said Helen, "I still don't understand. How did you get to know that she rang me up this morning and asked me to go shopping with her?"

"That," said Curtice, "is easy. I suggested it to her."

Helen made a pretty gesture of despair.

Preceded by the *maître d'hôtel,* they made their way to Curtice's discreet table in the corner.

"This," she said, "is really getting quite beyond me. How on earth could you have known that it was I who rang you up?"

It was then that Curtice delivered his broadside.

"I *didn't*," he said.

"But why—what——" said bewildered Helen. "Oh, really, you know, this is becoming quite too complicated for words! What did you say to Lady Tremayne when you rang her up?"

"I asked her to come to lunch with me here," said Curtice.

"But," protested Helen, feebly, "I thought you said a minute ago that you suggested to her—oh, dear! I hope I've got it all right!—that she should bring *me* to lunch with you?"

"So I did," said Curtice, blandly. "But that was afterwards."

"Afterwards!" gasped Helen. "After what?"

"Why," he replied, "after she had told me who you were, of course."

Helen bent her brow in perplexity. "Still," she said, "I quite fail to see how *I* come into it."

"Oh, that," said Curtice, "is really quite plain. You see, it was Lady Tremayne who told me that it was you who had rung me up."

"But who could have told her?" asked Helen.

"Hilda," was the surprising reply.

"Hilda!" ejaculated Helen. "How could Hilda have known?"

"Well," said Curtice, casually, "you see, Dickie told *her*."

"This," cried Helen, throwing up her hands in complete bewilderment, "grows worse and worse! Save my reason, and tell me how Dickie knew."

"He didn't know," said Curtice. "He only guessed when I told him the astonishing conversation I'd had with a girl this morning over his telephone."

"*His* telephone!" cried Helen.

"Yes," said Curtice. "I slept in his flat last night, you see."

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 128.

SLEEP turns to life, dullness to varied hue,
Beauty is born: *one* changes into *two*.

1. A letter change in Eastern town: to show
His son, coin and half coin with this must go.
2. The name complete the depths may well explain:
Let the head go, and all the rest remain.
3. A toss-up did the fate of him decide
Who worried one through whom this robber died.
4. Down at the green, up at the cross, outclassed
Upon the field, meeting reverse at last.
5. Explosive? Yes. If 'tis not safe to stay,
This island seek, a dozen miles away.
6. The fourth of twelve, but he is left behind.
In French we think, English we useless find.
7. One letter add, then by our word is meant
Twelve lines increased by nearly three per cent.
8. The city-dweller would too lengthy prove,
So cut the painter and two words remove.
9. Enter Xantippe, Katharine as well?
Enter a school instead, and learn to spell.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 128 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on March 12th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 127.

(*The Third of the Series.*)

ONE foot is all we here present,
Or, rather, its equivalent.

1. One of a dozen here we choose,
A word in use among the Jews.
2. To show his other name to you,
An English battlefield will do.
3. Succeed, and rightly. Take instead
Its other name; curtail, behead.
4. A vessel. Should one letter go,
A meal, and nothing more, would show.
5. Artichoke, turnip, spinach, bean—
Four instances of this are seen.
6. The way out. Add a letter, here
A coloured lady would appear.

PAX.

1.	T	isr	I
2.	W	arre	N
3.	E	roni	C
4.	L	aunc	H
5.	V	egetabl	E
6.	E	gres	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Jewish month. 2. Warren Hastings' 3. Veronica, speedwell. 4. Lunch. 6. Negress.

The name "Alderamin" is given in the Century Dictionary and in Proctor's Star Atlas; there are many spellings found.

Solvers who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should, with their letters, enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and he will endeavour to reply.

The Buried Treasure of One-Eye Gibb

BY

JAMES BARR

ILLUSTRATED BY
E. G. OAKDALE

SEATED on a ledge of rock deep down in a centuries abandoned mine, in pulsating silence, in ineffable blackness, and feeling as though he were the last man alive on earth huddled up in the centre of infinite oblivion; sun, moon, stars snuffed out and time forgotten, Sam Stover, reviewing the happenings of the last few days, came to the conclusion that he had set off on a wild-goose chase. This annoyed him, for he had a reputation to upkeep.

In the City they spoke of him admiringly as "Temerity" Stover, because he daringly adventured financially. He brought off quite impossible *coups*. He gloried in the fame of being the one man of money in London who would cheerfully plunge into a scheme which other speculators would not so much as look at, and pursue that scheme to a splendid capture. So when along came Lawrence Dawes, student, bringing the first buried-treasure proposition ever put before him, Stover felt as in honour bound to take a hand and play his ablest.

Lawrence Dawes was a student of literature pertaining to marauders in general and pirates in particular. Picking up at second-hand an ancient volume on buccaneers, Dawes had discovered a secret pouch underneath the leather binding. In this pouch lay folded a parchment of the sixteenth century recounting the history of One-Eye Gibb, a pirate, who with his ship and all hands had perished on Chesil Beach. But not before One-Eye Gibb had laid by a vast store of Spanish gold in an abandoned tin mine in Cornwall. And Dawes had found the dagger cut in stone which was the doorplate of One-Eye Gibb's treasure house.

"I'm after money, not romance," Stover had said to Dawes. "To bury oneself alive in a dead mine tracking down a drowned scoundrel's loot is the act of an oaf."

But a student, set on adventure and requiring financing, is surpassingly persuasive. And here in blackness sat Temerity Stover, obese and bland, regretting that he had allowed himself to be persuaded.

Secretly the two had descended into a mine abandoned long ages ago, they had felt their way along musty tunnels, following the sign of the dagger, and at length, coming to a small cavern, were suddenly met by a veritable blast of great bats. From ancient timber props the beasts headlong launched themselves in myriads to beat down upon the men in a living hurricane; the very blackness seemed suddenly to shale off into flakes, and each flake to take on wings and to hurtle about in a whirlwind of squeaking, squealing peevishness. The whole place smelt of bats, the whole place

squeaked of bats, bats choked the air, bats beat against the electric torches, the sharp claws of bats' wings sliced along the men's faces, bringing blood.

Stover felt nausea. Hastily turning up his coat-collar, he humped his shoulders, pulled his hat down over his ears, shut his eyes, and cowered.

"Douse the glim!" he cried to Dawes, at the same time snapping off his torch.

Dawes obeyed. A few seconds and the maelstrom of bats loosened.

Temerity Stover, when he could make himself heard, explained.

"Snap on your torch, collect the bats, and set off towards the shaft. A hundred yards on anchor your torch and leave these flying dragons to it. You have an extra torch. I'll sit here in the dark and await your return."

LIKE a miniature Statue of Liberty Dawes had moved off, and, as the queen bee is followed by her lovers, the bats clustered round the student.

Seated there, deep down beneath the crust of a dead world, not many minutes passed before dread fell upon Stover and settled like some black ghost upon his very soul. Shuttling the length of his backbone, shivers, alternately hot and icy, played hopscotch, every hair of his head slowly arose and became a spiked bristle. The silence was unimaginable, the blackness something solid that encompassed him. Above him the earth seemed to tremble in insecurity, about him musty, choking chaos, a region dead and buried and gone to dust long centuries ago, a graveyard of dry rot, of caverns, a wilderness of caved-in tunnels and old broken timbers. Awaiting his feet, he felt sure, yawned holes of depths unsoundable, lipping full of water blue-black from stagnation. Awe, fear ossified him. "I myself am the buried treasure," he muttered, in a hoarse whisper.

Now he feared to move, for he believed if he did so he would bring the brittle earth-crust crumbling down upon him to smother the breath out of him in slow, agonizing strangulation. As it was, he felt a stifling suffocation. He opened his mouth wide and gasped. He would have snapped on his torch, but that fear of bringing disaster upon his head paralysed his muscles. He seemed to sense something uncanny standing by eerily watching him, waiting. He longed for the return of his fellow-adventurer.

A hoarse roar burst from Temerity Stover. Sudden-flung arms pinioned him. A hairy cheek pressed close against his cheek; thick breathing gurgled in his ear; hot breath scalded his neck. A hug as of a boa-constrictor compressed his ribs. The first involuntary shout sent ringing, Stover sat tongue-tied from sheer horror. Not in him to make a fight for freedom. Some serpent of the underworld encompassed him, and now in imagination he beheld the reptile slavering its lips preparatory to swallowing him alive. A little while without a sound, then, above his head, bubbled out a weird cry, a hulloo eerily attuned to carry through the labyrinths of the ancient workings. A few moments during which the thick breathing ceased, then back came a like call. The pressure on Stover's ribs increased.

The intolerance of the compression added to the mental agony cleared Temerity Stover's vision, and peering hard he made out in blunt outline his surroundings, and the nebulous lines of the tentacles that shackled him. Hairy and lean, ending in fingers long and sinuous!

"The arms of a baboon!" he cried to himself, a shudder whipping the length of him.

The bubbling hulloo rumbled again; the answer sounded clearer, nearer. A few seconds and a form stood before Stover, the shape of a human being. The creature's approach was noiseless, from which fact Stover gathered that its feet were bare. A series of soft gurgles, some sort of strange language, smooth, liquid, like the cooing of a dove, then the new-comer snatched up the rope Dawes had temporarily abandoned and bound Stover past wriggling. His captor now came round from behind and stared at Stover, who judged the creature's eyes must be like a cat's. Next the creature advanced and pawed Stover over in search. Stover felt no repugnance at the touch, and this fact led him to believe that the creature must be a human being. The paw of a baboon would have been sickening. The creature discovered the revolver, and the two of them began to examine the weapon. Surely they were human! The conversation they carried on sounded intellectual above apedom, their movements were dignified, they displayed no monkey irresponsibility. Stover, believing they had never before handled a revolver, spoke quietly, cautioning them. They paid no attention to his words.

"Look after yourself, old fellow," counselled Temerity Stover to himself. "These creatures seem fairly able to take care of themselves and you too. And they'll look after Dawes as well if you don't gather your wits together."

Dawes? Dawes free might solve Stover's difficulties; Dawes a captive would be certain to multiply them. Without giving any intimation of his intention Temerity Stover raised a sudden shrill hulloo. Back came an answering shout; rather an

encouraging Cheerio from the student. "You're all right," it seemed to say.

"Am I, just ?" thought Stover.

At the sound of Dawes's voice the creatures started violently, and immediately there came a terrible explosion. Then like flashes of quick lightning athwart the rolling thunder of the reverberations there cut scream after scream.

"A woman! And she's shot!" barked Stover.

The revolver had been let fall. It had exploded. The bullet had found one of the creatures; a woman from the pitch of the voice. The flash of the pistol for the moment blinded Stover as the sound deafened him, but when partial sight returned he made out the forms of the creatures prostrate in the fairway at his feet. Beside himself with alarm and horror, but quite unable to stir, the adventurer called frantically again and again:—

"Help! Help! Perish the bats! Come on the run. Help!"

DAWES, having anchored one torch and secured a second, had just succeeded in butting his way back through the whirlwind of bats when Stover's frantic call struck him with sudden alarm. The crash of the revolver, the piercing shrieks, the frantic calls for help jumped him to the conclusion that Stover, going mad, had shot himself. Switching on the torch he carried he dashed ahead; then, remembering that a madman who shot himself may shoot others, he stopped behind the nearest elbow of the tunnel and peered round.

The place was in darkness. Whining sobs sounded.

Cautiously Dawes passed the torch round the angle and, himself keeping well in shelter, again peered. The scene he beheld drew from him a gasp of astonishment.

In the fairway on the floor of the tunnel were two creatures, wondrously strange, creatures prehistoric in their primitiveness, a man and woman out of the dim days of history's dawn; he covered with thick, straight hair, jet black; she radiant in hair of dancing, golden brown. Each wore a "loin-cloth" made of the skin of bats. His face was woolly from curly beard and whiskers, her cheeks downy like a peach. Their hair was long, his mane-coarse, hers fine and billowing about her, buoyant as a cloud of golden ether. Their eyes were large, and the fierce light of the torch smiting direct caused each to throw up an arm to ward off the glare. The man held the woman tightly in his long arms, his head bent lovingly over her in deep pity and fear. Over against this strange two sat Temerity Stover.

"I'm bound tighter than a round of beef," he called, impatiently. "Get the revolver away from them. Be wary."

Stepping nimbly forward, Dawes snatched up the revolver which lay by the man's feet, then leaping back stood well out of danger. He was now master of the situation, but he took no chances while setting Stover free. Temerity Stover stretched his limbs, then stood staring down at the neolithic-like cave-dwellers.

Two milder creatures than they beheld could scarcely be imagined. Great round tears rolled from the man's eyes; the woman's face was buried now in his bosom. She moaned unceasingly.

"The Lady in Old Gold is shot," exclaimed Temerity Stover, in great concern. The down that covered her resembled old gold under the torchlight. Dawes thrust the revolver into Stover's hand.

"Stand clear and be ready," he said, snatching up the bundle of bandages.

Boldly advancing, Dawes knelt down and at once found the wound. The bullet had scored through the fleshy part of the poor thing's calf, cutting a nasty wound, but, so guessed Dawes, the woman had curled up at the sight of the blood more than because of the pain. With the patience of an animal she allowed Dawes to apply the iodine and the bandage. The heart of Temerity Stover, generous and soft, was deeply touched.

"Buck up, old fellow," he kept calling encouragingly to the Cave Man, from whose eyes rolled great tears. "The Lady in Old Gold will pull through nicely, you'll see."

The Cave Man turned his great eyes as if in gratitude upon the fat man from the City. When Dawes had finished, the Cave Man arose, cooed something which the adventurers translated as thanks, then stooping down he picked up the woman and walked off into the tunnel.

"Good luck go with you, Lord Mayor of Battydom," Stover called after him, but Dawes asked sharply:—

"Sha'n't we, too, go with them?"

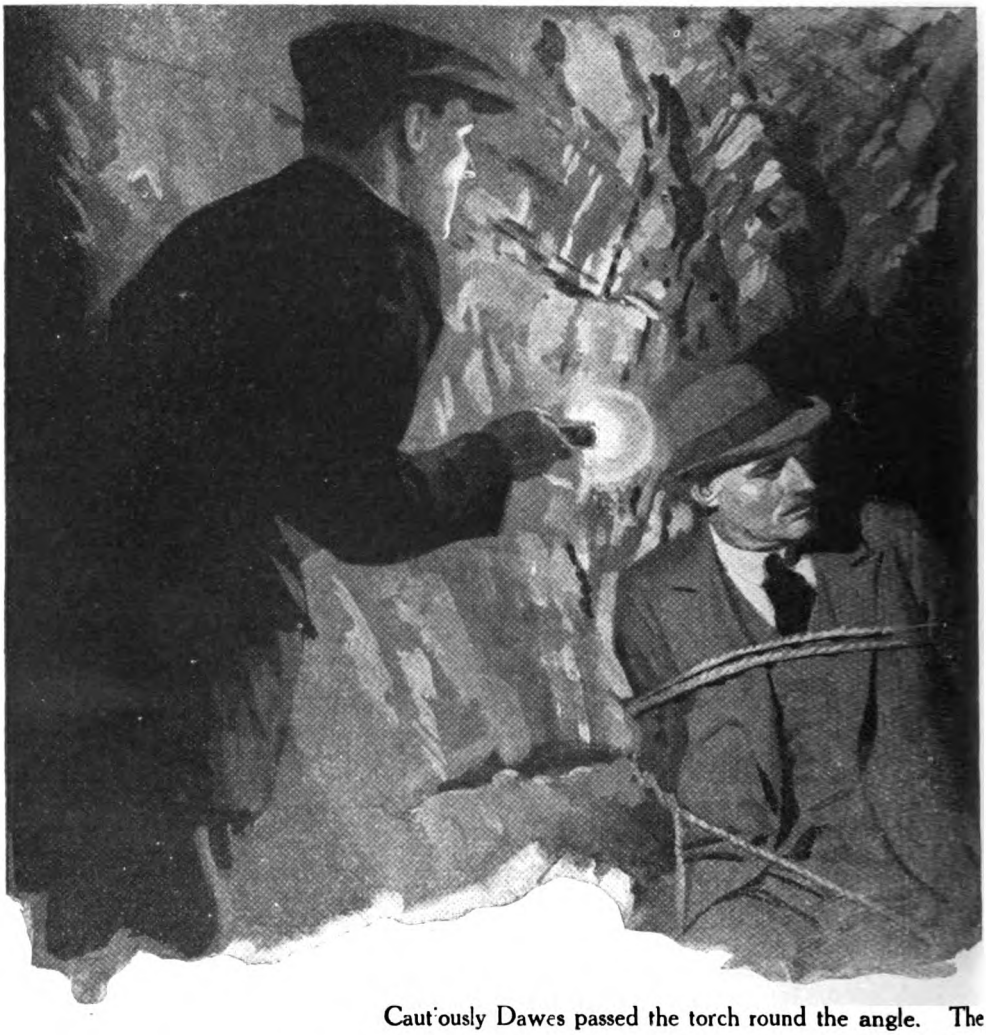
"Let well alone," advised Stover.

"Follow well up, I say," said Dawes, who, since coming into the tunnel, had been asserting himself more and more. "They may be invaluable to us. Of themselves they are a wonderful find."

"I didn't bury myself alive in search of neolithic citizens," growled Stover. "I came for sixteenth-century gold."

"And adventure. You said this was to be an expedition for adventure."

"Bats and Lord Mayor and—— By George, she's a remarkably fetching contemporary of Eve, is this Lady in Old Gold. What embellishing hair; what tiny, soft,



Cautiously Dawes passed the torch round the angle. The

sensitive hands; what shapely feet! It will be interesting to see where she lives, and how. Yes, I willingly follow."

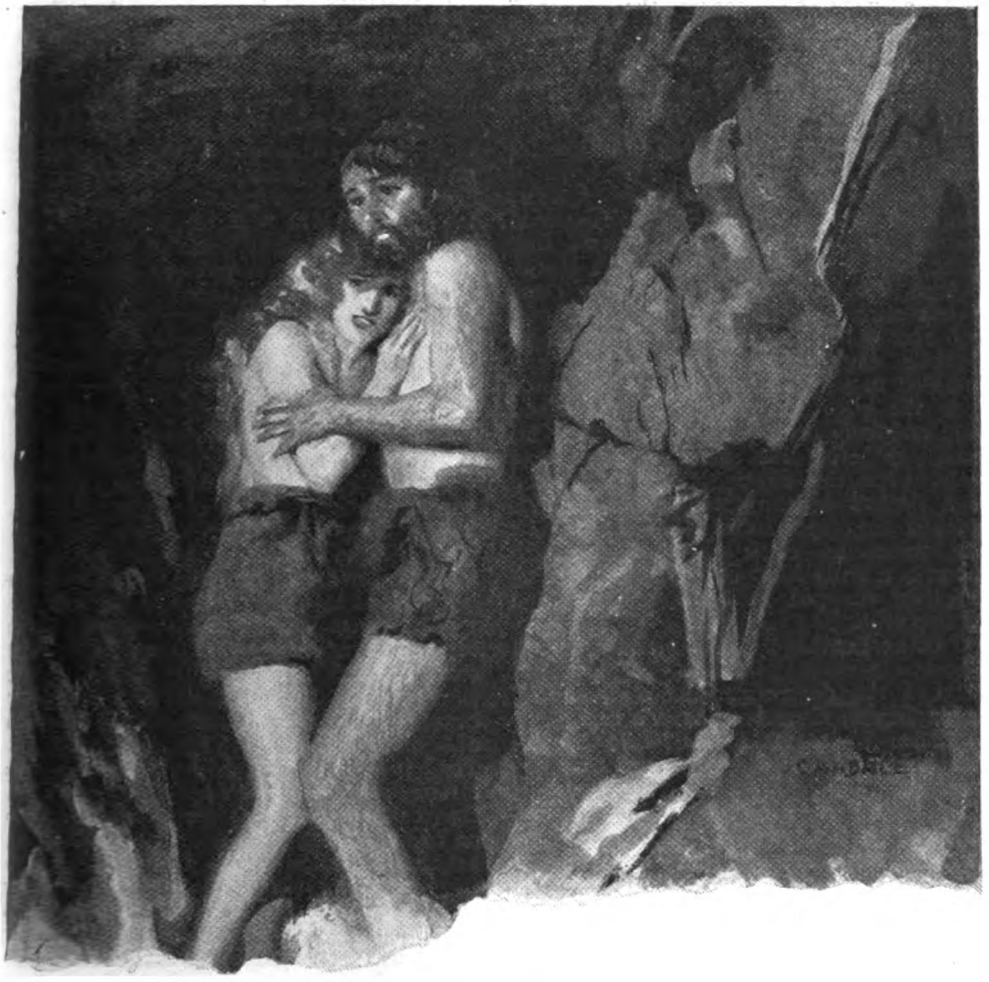
When they overtook the two, the Lady in Old Gold, whose head was hooked over the Cave Man's shoulder, gazed at Stover. Stover smiled his blandest. The woman's face lighted up in delighted response. She cried some sort of pleasantry to the adventurer.

"We have a friend at the Court of the Lord Mayor of Battydom," muttered Dawes.

"*I* have," said Temerity Stover, with uncompromising emphasis on the first person singular.

Three minutes later the two adventurers found themselves in the subterranean home of the Cave Man and the Lady in Old Gold. A cavern the size of a West-end drawing-room, the floor covered with coarse matting woven of dry seaweed, for seats four upended stumps of dry timber, a bed with coverings of bat-skins, and, hanging on the wall over a large flat stone that evidently served for a table, a string of bats and two large fishes. On the table was piled a small heap of glutinous seaweed, evidently used as greens, and a fire of wood burned slowly; the thin smoke overspread into an airy canopy of blue gauze. Everything appeared snug and tidy and clean.

Gently on the bed the woman was placed, but she would not consent to lie down, insisting on making light of her wound, and chattering away like a happy child to the delighted Stover. He seated himself on a log facing her, and to her uncontrolled jubilation pulled out a cigar and blew rings



scene he beheld drew from him a gasp of astonishment.

that, swirling and circling, held together to the very ceiling. For the first time since descending the shaft Stover found himself fear-free. He felt perfectly satisfied to sit and smoke and smile on the Lady in Old Gold.

Dawes was of different fibre. The greed for gold stirred strong in him. He glanced impatiently at the fat man, then began to saunter round the place, rather querulously examining the walls, the floor, the ceiling. Reaching the tunnel mouth over against where they had entered, he came to a full stop.

Again the dagger—the sign of One-Eye Gibb—cut in the rock. Again it pointed on.

Dawes had the Cave Man by the arm. He was jabbing a rigid forefinger against the dagger then stabbing into the blackness of the tunnel. The man, understanding what was asked of him, shot a glance at the woman and said something. She must have agreed, for he turned and entered the tunnel.

"Come along, sir," called Dawes, disappearing after the Cave Man.

Temerity Stover, making a grim face, flung his newly-lighted cigar into the fire, lumbered up on his feet, clapped his hat on, and, growling, turned to follow. Then, remembering the Lady in Old Gold, he doffed his hat and swept her a most gallant bow. She seemed to understand; she clapped her hands and laughed merrily.

Thirty yards on the adventurers became aware of a peculiar sound as of wind stirring among trees. Both men paused to listen. A small breeze fanned against their faces.

"We must be nearing the surface," said Stover, somewhat relieved, but Dawes shook his head.

"We are hundreds of fathoms deep underground," he said.

"But the breeze?"

"I do not understand it," admitted the student.

Forward they pushed, and in a few minutes came up with the Cave Man. He stood on the rim of a mighty well, a well that must have been two hundred feet across. Fifteen feet below his feet the black waters stirred uneasily, writhing and rolling and curling as though composed of gigantic water-serpents that moved and tumbled in wrath, and as the two peered over the edge at the tumult the Cave Man suddenly heaved his hands over his head, gathered his muscles taut, and leapt over the edge. His feet flipping high flashed in the torchlight, his hands speared into the surface, his body cleft the water as clean as a diving cormorant, a little knot of bubbles, crowding together, snapped to quick oblivion, and all was still.

"Great heavens! He's gone!" gasped Stover.

"Can the dagger-road lie that way?" asked Dawes, clutching Stover's arm.

"Then I do not follow," said Stover, definitely. "Who cares to go can have the treasure."

The two stood gazing down at the writhing, wrathful waters, and presently they saw that the surface was rapidly reaching up the mighty funnel. Up and up it came, in ever-increasing agitation, setting the air of the cavern in which they stood wafting off through the tunnel. Angrily surging, hissing, it swarmed up and up, and the adventurers, alarmed at its menace, crowded back hard against the wall. And just as the waters, unfolding from the centre like a great flower, reached their toes, breaking through the seething surface shot the head of the Cave Man, who, threshing across, flung himself out on to the rock. In one hand he held a large fish that impotently slapped and yawned. Standing there the man shook himself, the water rolling off him as off a duck; then he threw the fish skidding along the floor into the tunnel mouth, to be picked up on his return.

"So this is the Lord Mayor's fishing-ground," cried Stover, delighted at the daring of the man. "This explains his larder of fishes and seaweed! An arm from the sea thrust for miles and miles deep under Cornwall here froths and tumbles and acts as an automatic punkah to all this part of the musty mine."

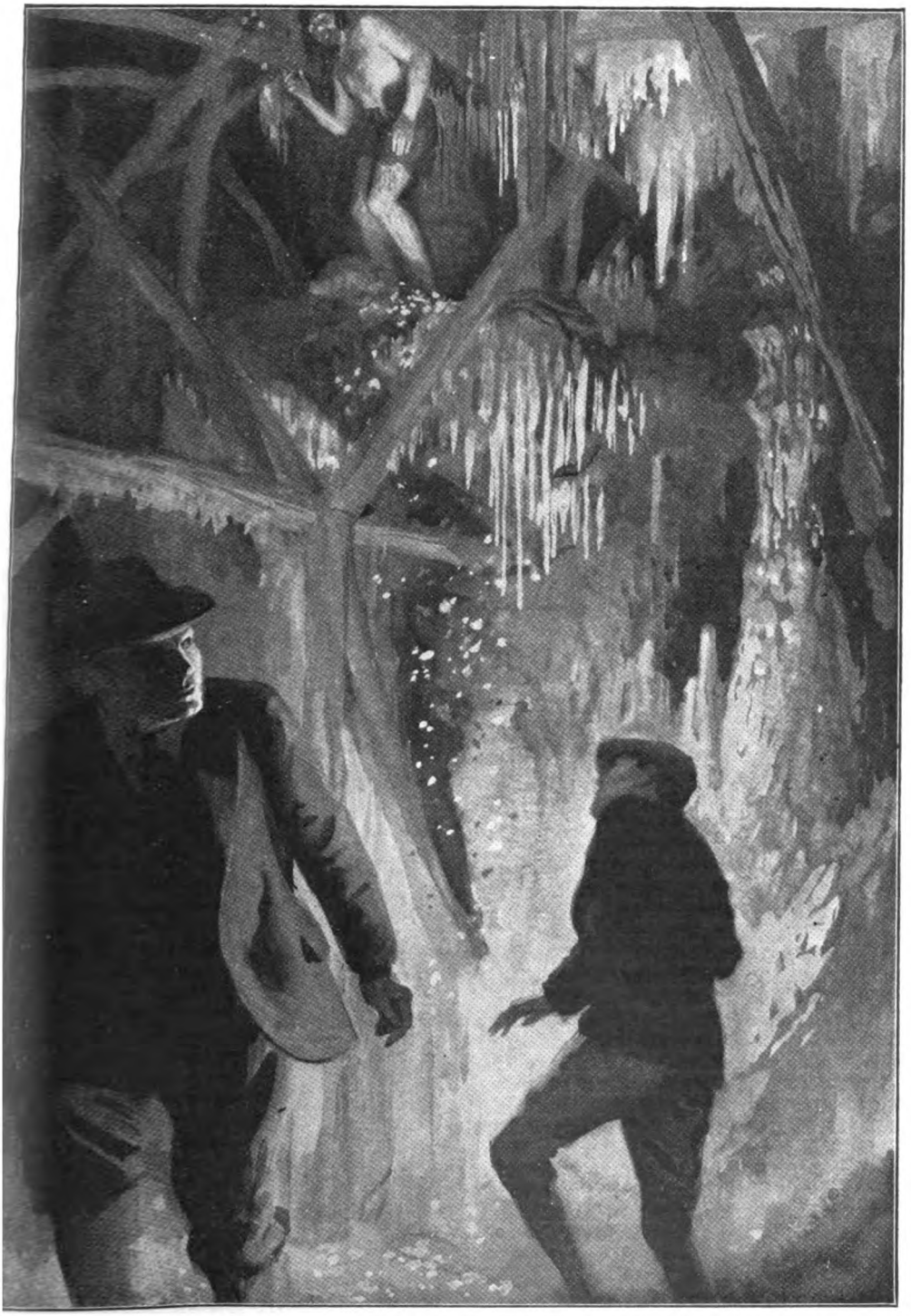
A WEIRD eerie journey now, the trail one long sore trial. Scrambling over fallen rocks and tangled timbers that had once supported those rocks, passing through shower-baths of ice-cold water that drip-dripped from the ceiling, stirring up the dust of dead ages, squeezing through interstices, on hands and knees through sections of tunnel where one displaced stone would have imprisoned them past all hope of rescue, wading through deep pools of water, black and stagnant, breathing air musty and sour—and still the daggers ever pointing on until it seemed as if they were destined to follow daggers all the days of their lives.

On a sudden the adventurers stood wonder-bound. It was as if they stepped out upon the floor of a stupendous cathedral, a cathedral still in the building. A gigantic cavern it was, the interior one mass of props and scaffoldings, of braces and supports and ties flung in airy flight and all intact after centuries; mighty timbers, rough and knotted and bent, springing aloft from the solid rock, towering in a marvellous lacework of logs, tier upon tier, so that the topmost were lost in the vastness of the cathedral vaulting. Timbers abutted on timbers, until in the infinity of scaffolding the light of the torch, glancing from mighty beam to mighty beam, merged into a region of bewildering chequered lights and shadows. The adventurers cowered in presence of the dizziness of it all. The multiplicity of props, the scaffolding, the rafters combined into an overwhelming spectacle that bewildered, benumbed. Like pigmies infinitely humble they stood in presence of the infinitely majestic. The very Cave Man held his breath. He stood with arms folded, his face turned up and his great eyes trying to thread a way through the labyrinth.

He it was, however, who first pulled himself together. He glanced about him, then picked something off the floor and stood examining it with the curiosity of a child. Dawes, after a mighty shiver, shot a sharp glance at the Cave Man; then, stooping down, picked up a yellow flake from the floor and placing it on his left palm shot the light of the torch upon it.

"A Spanish doubloon," he cried, staring at the gold.

The next instant the student was running along on hands and knees, snatching up scattered pieces of gold and pouching them, while Stover and the hairy man looked on wonderingly. Coming to a heap of doubloons, Dawes poured handful after handful into his pocket, but observing immediately over his head the sign of the dagger he paused. This dagger pointed up. Flashing his torch aloft Dawes backed away from the wall. Well past the abutment of the third tier of



The Cave Man placed his bare foot against that glittering pile of gold and shoved.

scaffolding his eye sighted a yellow-red gleam. Up there ran a ledge. A sack of doubloons had been placed so near the edge of this ledge that when the rotten sacking gave way these tell-tale coins on the floor had slithered over.

"One-Eye Gibb's storehouse," cried Dawes, throwing an arm excitedly towards the ledge. "And here's the Lord Mayor's chance."

Dawes pointed aloft; the Cave Man understood, and the next instant was swarming up the timbers on his way to the gold-bedecked ledge forty feet overhead. Nimbly he ran along the laterals, agile as a monkey he shinned up perpendiculars, with gripping fingers and flat feet he walked up timbers steeply slanting, then with an easy leap he stood erect on the ledge. He placed his bare foot flat against that glittering pile of gold and shoved. The danger to those below never crossed his mind, but it did the adventurers', and simultaneously they dashed for the tunnel mouth. Just as they entered this the gold mass struck the timbers with a crash, then burst asunder like exploding shrapnel. The gold pieces flashed and spatted and flung, pitting the walls and ringing about like angry bees, and before the first lot became quiescent down smashed a second. The Lord Mayor was industrious. At each thrust of his flat foot a small fortune fell. Verily One-Eye Gibb was rendering up great riches. The dagger had struck home.

THE bubbling pigeon-call sounded and the happy adventurers ventured cautiously out from the protection of the tunnel. The cavern floor was covered with gold. Dawes shot the light up, revealing the Cave Man pointing to a second shelf twenty-five feet above his head; he indicated that a vast second horde lay there. They saw him swing and leap from timber to timber trying to find one from which he could reach this new store, but this richer ledge was isolated. No beam overhung it, the nearest beam was quite eight feet from its edge. The Cave Man stood on this beam. He pondered his chances. He crouched, he gathered his muscles taut, he strung his nerves. Then, like the snapping free of bent whalebone, he launched himself through the air. A cry of alarm went up from the startled men below. Across the awful chasm flew the hairy one; his feet smote flat upon the ledge, his toes hooked, he flung his hands far out upon the rock, he sought to fling himself on to the ledge.

He failed.

His taloned fingers, finding no sure anchorage, began slowly to slip, while his feet held firm. And there for a few tense moments he held, protruding like a gargoyle from the eaves of Notre Dame. Inch by inch those finger-tips scored along the ledge, the nails tearing free in the fierceness of his talon-grip on the rock, and at length he recognized failure. With a quick jerk he slued his head aside to fling one swift glance below. In that instant given him he located a beam perhaps twenty feet down and ten feet out from the wall. Swiftly he accepted the chance. Flinging free his hands, with a mighty thrust of his legs he hurtled himself through the air like a tossed caber. The watchers below held their breath. They beheld him spread arms and legs and come sailing down like a flying squirrel. Flat on his hands and feet he struck, using his sinewy limbs as shock-absorbers, but, only able somewhat to break the fall, he crashed upon the horizontal timber, round which he threw his limbs with the grapple of despair.

"He's done it. Thank God, he's safe!" cried Stover, trembling like a man who had seen a ghost.

Stover's joy was premature.

From the very pitch of the dizzy dome there volleyed a sound as of the firing of a field-gun. Into the embroidery of timbers Dawes shot the light and beheld the Cave Man spring to his feet, cast one swift glance aloft; then, reckless of limb or life, begin to leap from timber to timber like a chamois down the side of a precipice.

Aloft there in the gloom of the roof-vault it was as though a planet had blundered, bumping out of its course. Then came devastation. Then came blinding chaos. The Cave Man's fall upon that beam had been so heavy that the jar of it set the whole vast creation of timbers ajolt, and, as Fate would have it, the very topmost timber, the one that crowned the apex, that thrust its head into the topmost niche of the cavern, was the one that failed. From its centuries-old pedestal it reeled and, falling, began to flail a way through the interwoven timbers, creating in its path an ever-widening vortex of devastation. Supports were knocked from under supports, and the whole mighty roof of the cathedral, robbed of props and crutches, collapsed and poured rocks weighing infinite tons down into the vast cavity as though some Colossus, in stature miles high, poured sackfuls of mammoth coals into the mouth of Vesuvius. Thundering through the splintering, springing scaffolding, down came the irresistible avalanche. Under the very eaves of descending annihilation the two adventurers madly dashed to win their only hope of safety, the tunnel mouth. Tiny specks of animation, they fled like mice before the onroaring waters of a burst mill-dam.

Just before he entered the tunnel, Stover, risking all, paused to plant the lighted torch. He believed the Cave Man trapped to destruction. Not a million to one chance did he think the poor fellow stood of reaching the tunnel, but on that one infinitely remote chance Temerity Stover planted the guiding light. No sooner had he accomplished his purpose than a mighty wind roaring down upon him picked him up and hurled him into the tunnel mouth and wafted him as though he were an autumn leaf along the tunnel. The earth rocked, the air shrieked, gigantic noises bellowed and thundered. Half a thousand timbers, breaking loose from their age-long positions, kicked and flailed in the air, then mingled with the rocks to crash together.

Temerity Stover at length getting his feet under him beheld Dawes clinging to a timber prop. He joined the student and together they clung while the stampeding winds buffeted them as a cat might buffet a terror-numbed mouse. Amidst the clamour of a collapsing world they grimly held on.

One-Eye Gibb's gold ? Buried now deeper than any human being was ever likely to grope. A million tons of virgin rock volleyed down upon it. Lost for ever, and the man in all the world who cared least was Temerity Stover. He dismissed it with a damn. And when at last he was able to stand up without clinging to the prop his first thoughts were for the Lady in Old Gold. How dare they face her ?

"We must go back," he shouted, to make himself heard. "The poor fellow——"

"The poor fellow is past assistance," bawled back Dawes. "We are not out of the bush ourselves."

"Very well. Out of the bush you get; I go back into the bush."

For the first time since he swung over the shaft Stover found himself in complete control of himself.

"Give me your torch," requested Stover.

Dawes hesitated a moment; then, pulling himself together, said :—

"I'm with you."

Through the dust and the whirlwinds that spun and danced like angry witches the two battled back, and fifty yards from the still-roaring, groaning cavern, the cavern of ineffable chaos, there where he had been flung by the hurricane that billowed him from under the avalanche lay the Cave Man, insensible. Stover placed his ear against the man's bosom.

"Life in him yet," he sang out joyously to Dawes.

Quickly they gathered him up and off they staggered, but not very far had they borne their burden before two things happened. First, the Cave Man came-to. Second, an instant later, out of the blackness dashed the Lady in Old Gold. Whilst not able to forget her wound, she despised it At the first sound of chaos she had leapt from her bed and torn through the black resounding tunnels to the rescue of her man. A wild cry, half anguish, half joy, rang from her when she beheld him ; she enfolded him in her supple arms, she hugged him close and warm to her bosom, and, despite bullet wound and the frailty of her build, she ran with him so nimbly that the adventurers were put to it to keep up with her. Amid deep growlings coming from the slow-to-settle rocks and timber, buffeted by air still panicky and smelling strong of old decay, the Lady in Old Gold pressed on, carrying the Cave Man, while Temerity Stover and Lawrence Dawes followed, fleeing as from the destruction of Pompeii.

TWO days later Dawes entered Temerity Stover's office. He brought with him the two hundred and eighteen doubloons he had gathered from the floor of the lost cavern. He came to carry out the pact ; to share and share alike. Temerity Stover waved them aside.

"Keep the gold and have a cigar," he said, quietly. "I've had my adventure. For you I am sorry. Like Moses, you were but given a sight of the Promised Land. But when the gods hurl the avalanche, what can a mortal do ? "

"The cave people ? " said Dawes, inquiringly.

"They trusted us, let us fulfil the trust. Keep their secret. All my Lord Mayor and my Lady in Old Gold ask is to be left alone. It's one of those littles that amount to such a lot."

THE ACID TEST

by

AUSTIN PHILIPS

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

UP from the Severn and its plain the November fog stole slowly, implacably, and surely, to envelop the ancient cathedral city of Belboro. In the little two-roomed, low-roofed Georgian building by the main entrance to the walled garden of the Deanery, Daphne Colvannick, the Dean's eldest daughter, rose from the table at which she was sitting and walked to the lattice window and opened it and looked out towards the hidden, mist-hung lawn—and then shivered and closed the window and came back again.

But not to the writing-table, where she had been finishing that absurd social article for the *Murcestershire Intelligencer* which she did, weekly, to add something to the very slender allowance which her father could afford to make her in these difficult post-war days. She began, on the contrary, ceaselessly and anxiously to stride the floor of this little old room of what had long ago been the Porter's Lodge, and which from childhood had been her special possession, filled with her books—having a tiny bedroom adjoining—a sanctum where she rested, worked—and dreamed.

She was a prey at this moment to sheer terror. For it had dawned upon her only a few hours ago that she might have made the mistake of her life and be on the very point and edge of ruining it; and ever as she strode the floor of this old, brown-walled study her eyes went restlessly, doubtfully, fearfully, to the photographs above the mantelpiece.

All of them were of the same man—young, dark inevitably (for Daphne Colvannick was fair exceedingly, and had hair whose strands were golden and whose skeins were copper), strikingly handsome, in flannels, in uniform, in mufti, and in a multitude of cricket groups. This was her *fiancé*, Harry Blackwell. He was an exceptionally fine amateur batsman; for the first few overs only, the fastest fast bowler in England; full of vitality; one who, merely an insurance agent, had emerged by reason of his great personal attractiveness; who was asked everywhere, who went everywhere; who was the spoiled darling of the county, and was called by its cynical cricket-captain, "Harry, the schoolgirl's dream"!

And Daphne, intelligent and beautiful—in a sense Harry Blackwell's counterpart, for as a woman she was easily the most outstanding figure in old Belboro—had let herself become engaged to him, either because she loved him or, as a frank girl-friend had once said to her, because of the fuss he had made of her and his tremendous local reputation. This second reason was the truer, probably. For Daphne had in many ways been disappointed. Harry Blackwell seemed, somehow, to lack fineness. She had come to wonder, very often, if they ought to get married after all!

Asking herself definitely this question, she stopped her striding a moment and opened a drawer and took out another photograph which she did not keep framed or even visible, because Harry's nature was such a jealous one. This photograph—taken seven or eight years ago—was of the son of the late Chief Constable of Murcestershire—a boy who had adored her, whom she had adored also, and who had gone away, farming, to Rhodesia, having little or no money. Now he had come back, wealthy and successful, no older than Harry Blackwell, and, as his sister had written to her recently, still wanting her as much as ever

and yet never told of her engagement for fear that it might worry and upset him. It was of Roger Treffry that Daphne Colvannick was thinking, chiefly, in her storm and stress and solitude. Ought she to marry him if he asked her—if he came to Belboro to propose to her? Or ought she to stick to Harry Blackwell? Where lay highest happiness? Where lay truest duty? Which of these two men did she love?

"I want your help, Daphne! I'm in a terrible mess."

And then, swiftly, suddenly, dramatically, into her life Fate dropped a bombshell, terrible, devastating, and upheaving, yet seeming to decide the whole grave issue in one fleeting quarter of an hour.

For at the door of the Porter's Lodge there came a knocking; and she heard, hoarse, breathless, half-whispered, a voice she knew only too well.

"Harry!" she cried, and crossed the room rapidly. Then, having opened, she stepped backward, recoiling in absolute terror.

For Harry Blackwell stood before her—wholly other than the Harry she was used to; handsome still, but buoyant and debonair no longer; his face dead white, his eyes fearful, his whole ordinarily strong being shaking and trembling.

"Yes, it's I!" he managed to answer, after several seconds of palsied silence, in which his dry tongue seemed to be trying to moisten drier lips and absolutely refusing to function. "I want your help, Daphne!"

"My help!"

"Yes—and badly. I'm in a terrible mess. It's no use mincing matters. I must trust you wholly if I trust you at all—and I do trust you. I've killed Allan Carpmael!"

"What?"

"Yes—I've killed him—and that's the whole end of the matter!"

Daphne stood looking at him, almost

petrified. She had no doubts of any sort concerning his truthfulness or his sanity. Guilt was written all over him. His face cried it aloud to her; he was white, hollow-eyed, and fearful—whole leagues away from being the handsome, care-free Harry Blackwell who was the popular idol of the spectators on the Murcester county cricket ground. And instantly Daphne's thoughts turned to the manner of the killing and the death of this same Allan Carpmael—a man whom she had detested; an auctioneer and house-agent, loose-living and vulgar, though rich and exceedingly useful to Harry, in whose way he had often put business.

"HOW—oh, how did you do it?" she gasped, presently.

"Do it! He brought it on himself. He came to my rooms about six" (Harry had rooms above his offices by the riverside and got all his meals at the club in the Foregate)—"and the rain came on as we chatted—and we were bored, and messed about looking at old kit and equipment, and then we sat down to play two-handed nap—at a shilling a point, Daphne. I won—I've never had such a run of luck in my life—and Allan Carpmael got perfectly furious—you know he had an awful temper—and he accused me of cheating and of dealing myself winning hands—and then he sneered about you and said things that even now I can't tell you, about men you'd loved before I met you. That simply maddened me. I jumped up at once to hit him—and before I knew where I was I was looking down the barrel of a revolver. I knocked it up and grabbed his wrist, but he nearly knocked me out with the other hand, and as I stumbled back I snatched up the poker and struck quickly, to save myself from a bullet, and I hit him full on the temple. He dropped like a log. I did what I could, but he was stone-dead—he's gone stiff already!—and I want your help, Daphne!"

"How, Harry? How? Of course, I'll do everything possible!"

"I knew you would. Well, first I must get rid of the body!"

"Get rid of it! But why, Harry?"

"Because if it is found at my rooms I shall be had for murder!"

"Murder?"

"Yes. Haven't I killed him?"

"But in self-defence, surely!"

"I know. But how can I prove it?"

"Why, he had a revolver—and levelled it at you!"

"Yes. But it wasn't his. It was mine, Daphne. I'd just given it to him, with some ammunition, as we looked through that old kit, about an hour earlier. He'd brought two wonderful old cricket engravings he'd picked up at one of his auctions, and I swopped my pistol for them!"

"And there is no proof that he drew it on you?"

"Not the slightest. I'm as good as a dead man, Daphne, if I can't get rid of the body!"

Harry pulled up short and stood looking at her, breathless, dejected, and wretched, as though almost on the threshold of the scaffold. And the heart of Daphne Colvannick—who but a few minutes back had been questioning and debating if she loved him—went out to him in his misery, and she ached to help and to save.

"Oh, you poor old thing!" she cried, impulsively. "You did this for me—for me—because he spoke lightly of me. I'll do everything in this world to aid you. What is it that you want of me?"

"Your oath that I came here at five o'clock this afternoon and spent the evening talking to you and waited here while you went into the Deanery to dine, and that you came back here again afterwards and that I left for my rooms at eleven. But you won't be asked to swear anything. I've a better plan than that. Your brother, Geoffrey, is in London?"

"Yes—at the Temple."

"Good. I want his waders!"

"His fishing waders?"

"Yes—those big, high rubber boots of his. But first I'll tell you my plan, Daphne!"

Harry Blackwell dropped into a chair exhaustedly. Daphne tottered to another one. Pale-faced, ashen-grey nearly, heart bumping and then half stopping, she heard his daring plan.

"You know my office is built right on the Severn bank!" he panted.

"Yes, Harry!"

"Well, not a soul knows that Allan Carpmael came to my rooms to see me—my clerk had gone half an hour before. All I have to do is to hide his body somewhere!"

"You're not going to drop it in the river, just beneath your windows?"

"No—because if the millionth chance happened and it was found and he was traced to my rooms, I shouldn't even be able to plead self-defence—it would look too calculated and deliberate. *My* scheme is to plant it on the other side of the Severn!"

"But how?"

"There's Jacky Soames's punt moored close handy—he gets to it out of my basement. Well, I'm going to put the body into that punt, pole down stream for a mile or so, and drop it in one of the fields near the towing-path. And to do that I must wear not only gloves but something that will disguise my footprints and give no identifiable

impression—that is to say, your brother's waders. Now do you take my meaning ? "

Daphne nodded and rose immediately. She was on fire to help him to the uttermost. Love or no love, it would have been utterly opposed to all those ideals which she cherished in respect of her duty towards a man who called her his *fiancée* (and who had struck a man who had foully insulted her) not to work to the uttermost to save him.

" I'll go at once and get them for you ! " she said, eagerly. " Wait here, Harry. And of course lock the door after me ! "

She hurried out into the fog, tiptoeing her dark and dangerous way across the lawn, knowing that she must on no account touch-on any torchlight, and presently she caught the gleam of lamps in the Deanery windows. She passed in at the back door of the building and went through the kitchens and, crossing the hall swiftly, entered a little room, close to the front door, given up to the family sports' equipment.

She dared not touch-on the switch there. But she felt for, and found, her brother's waders. Even then her difficulties were not ended, for she could not go back through the kitchens lest the maids should see her carrying them. She peeped into the hall from the darkness. She heard the voices of her sisters and her mother, chatting gaily close by in the drawing-room, knew her father hard at work in his upstairs study, stepped forward quickly, opened the front door, slipped out, closed it after her gently, and was engulfed in the darkness of the drive. Three minutes later—her way back all on gravel—she was tapping on the door.

He came to open it, snatched the waders, and then threw his arms round her warmly.

" Splendid ! " he cried. " And now, Daphne, keep a stiff upper-lip. Daring is going to save me, and no one is ever going to know anything ; and we shall be married six months hence as I said we should. Once I can get rid of that body all our worries will be over. For Allan Carpmael told me when he first came in that he had left the club, saying he was going over to Pershore to see some friends there, and that he only changed his mind at the last minute because it was getting very foggy, and so came along to my rooms ! "

Harry Blackwell pulled her to him again and kissed her. Then he passed out into the fog. Daphne locked the outer door. She staggered back into her own little sanctum and sank, exhausted, on the couch.

IN a few minutes—twenty or twenty-five, possibly—her whole world had changed and altered. She had passed in that time from the position of a free being to the part and condition of a slave.

She stood tied to Harry Blackwell irrevocably ; tied by the bonds of common guilt —was she not *particeps criminis*, accessory after the fact, helper and concealer of a murderer ? And was she not also knotted, linked, and bound to him by a bond infinitely stronger—that of honour, generosity, common gratitude to a man who had stood up for her reputation against a vulgar traducer, and who—spiritedly defending her—had set his neck in the noose for her sake ? Love him ? No, assuredly ! Even in this dark hour she saw that fact now, crystal-clear and plainly. But to desert him, disappoint him, harm him, let him down in any way, was impossible to a nature such as hers.

The hours ticked away their monotonous accompaniment to her misery. " Look ! " sang the clock on the mantelpiece in the inner room where she lay, in bed now and sleepless. " Look through the night and the fog, Daphne—see what is going on outside those offices and rooms of Harry Blackwell on the river—he is even now lowering Allan Carpmael's body into the punt and poling it down the river, his feet cased in ' waders,' climbing the bank a mile outside the town—I know to a yard the spot he will choose to land at !—shouldering his ghastly burden, staggering across the towing-path, dropping it over a hedge, then hastening backwards to pole his way upstream to his rooms again. Can he make the journey in this darkness ? And—oh, my God ! my God ! " —so sang the clock, seeming to change its rhythm as it did so—" supposing, as he goes, the fog clears suddenly and one of the policemen, patrolling, sees him and comes near and learns all ! "

She leaped up and rushed to the window and flung it wide with a deep sob of thankfulness. The fog still held and—the hour was three now—the perilous passage must be accomplished and Harry back safely at his rooms again. What must *he* be feeling like ? Was he, too, in mortal terror ? Or had the need for action restored, renewed, and remanned him, made him his old strong self ?

So the small hours ebbed in horror. Dawn came. The fog had now gone utterly. Daphne looked upon a fine and sunny morning. She rose, dressed, did her utmost to remove the outward signs and imprints of this night of long-drawn agony. When the Deanery gong sounded for breakfast she hurried over to the house.

Her father was at the head of the table already—handsome, scholarly, broad-minded, and assuredly ear-marked for a bishopric—and a new dread came to Daphne as she thought of his future, shipwrecked should her part in this murder be made public. Her four sisters were there also—three of them engaged and one likely to be—while

her mother, none too strong nowadays, had a tendency to weakness of heart. Harry! Hardly knowing it, she hated him! And yet because of her own great fineness and the lofty ideals she had inherited she was his more than ever, and irrevocably chained to him, firmly and for always, by the truest and highest in herself!

"Burning the midnight oil, Daphne?" said her father presently, speaking to her tenderly and affectionately, but rather seriously, at the sight of her face, so obviously tired and weary despite the powder which she had put on it.

"A little," she answered, and managed to force a smile somehow. "I couldn't finish my account of the Mayor's reception properly."

"Well, you'll have to look better than that, my dear, if Roger Treffry is to recognize you!" put in one of her sisters. "You know he's back in Belboro?"

"Already?"

"Yes—staying with his cousins at Shelsley Beauchamp—or so Jack told me last evening; he'd just seen him at the station." (Jack was the speaker's *fiancé*). "You know that Roger has made pots of money in Rhodesia?"

"I hear so!"

Daphne had spoken in a voice which repelled further gossip. But all glanced at her surreptitiously, for all knew of her and Roger's boy and girl affection. And all hated her engagement, despite Harry Blackwell's great local reputation. Certainly he had personality. Assuredly he had quantities of vitality. But just a little he "bounded." He was more than a little of a cad!

THE meal ended presently—as ultimately do end most purgatories. Daphne fled immediately to the Porter's Lodge.

Before she had been there five minutes, the sister who had spoken of Roger came running into the sanctum.

"Have you seen Geoffrey's waders?" she asked, anxiously.

"Geoffrey's waders?"

"Yes. Jack asked me to borrow them. He's going wildfowl-shooting next week in Norfolk, and wants a pair. I thought Harry might have got them!"

"Harry!"

"Yes. It wouldn't be the first time! But, of course, he wouldn't take them without asking. It's an awful nuisance. I thought they were in the den, but I can't find them—and I suppose Jack will have to buy some!"

The speaker passed out again as hurriedly as she had entered. But Daphne, leaning forward, put her face between her hands. Harry now seemed ear-marked as having worn, though not actually owned, waders. New and direr terrors came crowding on her. She ached to go to his offices. But that she simply dared not. To do so would be nothing short of madness. It might connect her with the crime—oh, had the body in that field by the river been discovered yet? She must wait, somehow, till a few minutes before one, when she could be sure to encounter him—as though casually—as he left, to lunch at the club.

She sank into a chair and closed her eyes and—worn out absolutely—dozed a little. Then she woke and started up.

For someone had knocked at the door. She stood panting, compelling herself to courage. But fear assumed her and mastered her. Was it—oh, God, was it a detective—or was it Harry, in person, come to tell her all was lost?

And then, amazing and all unthought of, she heard a voice that she keew.

"Daphne! Are you there? May I come in?"

A great torrent of relief came to her. She leaped up and rushed to the door to open it—and a man came in as she did so and took hold of both her hands. He was tall and magnificently healthy-looking, and bronzed by the winds and suns of the Rhodesian uplands—lacking Harry Blackwell's arresting good looks, but with greater reserve and more character, quieter and fuller of true power.

"Roger!" she said, almost ecstatically, and forgetting in the delight of seeing him the awful horror that hung over her. And in a second she was aware that, though it was years since she had seen him, the old flame of their love had uprisen the moment they set eyes on one another—or, rather, not the old flame, but a higher and stronger affection, made white-hot by long separation and bringing with it something deeper than passion—an immense sense of rest and peace.

"Daphne!" Roger Treffry answered. "Dear, dear old Daphne! And in the same old Porter's Lodge where I said goodbye to you!"

"Yes. The same old room, Roger!"

"And you're still unmarried, Daphne!"

"Yes. I—I—tell me of yourself, Roger!"

He told her, sitting there happily, of his work, his struggles, his sufferings, his disappointments, and the success which had followed after them. Daphne listened and interjected (acting as she had never acted even when playing lead with Harry Blackwell in the local shows at Belboro theatre), knowing all the time that her life was ruined, that the man she really loved, though so close now, was really worlds away from

her, that she was tied for life to Harry, who had killed a man who had spoken lightly of her, and to whom, in his trouble, she owed a steadfastness which she would not be called to give him in good luck.

AND over and above all this hung the fear—the sword of Damocles—ever sharper. Had the body been found yet? Was Harry suspected? If so, would those who had doubts of him come and question her here?

Half-past twelve struck. Now or never she must be starting if she were to catch Harry between office and club, as though naturally, and to learn from his lips what had happened—that was, were he still at liberty. She rose hurriedly and then, regretting her impulsiveness and fearing it might arouse suspicion, stood for a couple of seconds looking at Roger's honest face.

"I must go down town now!" she said, trying to speak calmly.

"All right. I'll come with you!"

"Will you?" She did not dare to gainsay him. Five minutes later they were walking towards the centre of the town.

They reached "The Cross." The club was on the right. Harry's offices were on the left, several hundred yards farther. The street was crowded. A couple of men, who were crossing it, emerged from behind some traffic, walking arm-in-arm, and talking very gaily. One—so it seemed to Daphne—was Harry Blackwell. And the other—Heaven of Heavens!—surely the coarse, ruddy face on the slightly overdressed body was that of no other than him whom Harry last night had murdered—Allan Carpmael, the young auctioneer!

For exactly seventy-five seconds Daphne knew nothing further. She had reeled and tottered, and must have fallen heavily to the pavement had not Roger Treffry seen what seemed to him her sudden vertigo and held her up in his arms.

"You're ill!" he said, anxiously, as he saw her recover and look at him, and before more than one or two passers had noticed her condition.

"Only a trifling faintness. A cab? No, we'll walk home—I'd much rather!"

She took his arm and they started. Luckily he was silent out of sympathy. Daphne's brain was on fire.

For she had seen a dead man. And she had seen Harry Blackwell, who last evening had murdered him, talking and laughing with him gaily. She feared, nay, felt certain, that after the strain of what had happened she had had a horrible hallucination. Would it stop there? she wondered, or would it go on farther? Could she be, was she, going mad?

"You'll let me take you right in to your people and let me explain how you nearly fainted in the High Street!" said Roger, solicitously, tenderly, as they reached the gates of the Deanery.

"No. I'll go to the lodge. It's quieter, and I can rest there."

Roger took her through the gates to it. She lay down at once on the couch. He sat down beside her, loath to leave her, and she too terrified—lest the spectre of Allan Carpmael should return to her—to have strength to ask him to go. She had only been resting for five minutes when there came a knocking at the door.

It was loud—yes, and authoritative, as of one who had a right to enter. Daphne started up, galvanized—for the thought of the police was still foremost with her. Then, before even Roger rose, the door was pushed open noisily—and a man came into the room.

"Hullo, Daphne, old thing!" he called, boisterously—and then started surprisedly as he became aware of Roger Treffry's presence. "I haven't had lunch yet, and I don't mind if your people give me some; but I just looked in to tell you you needn't worry yourself. That was only a hoax last evening!"

"A hoax?"

"Yes—old Allan Carpmael was chipping me about my acting in that last show you and I were in at the theatre, and we were talking about women, and he hinted that you in particular were rather fickle and selfish. (I don't think either of you like each other much, Daphne!) And he suggested I should test you by coming to you and pretending I had murdered him, and see if you'd help me and become (as you believed it) an accessory. So I took him on—I owed him twenty pounds, and this was double or quits, you see—and came here and kidded you. You behaved like a brick, old thing! I'm getting you a topping wristlet watch for it. But, I say, what price my acting? I must have done it pretty efficiently!"

Harry laughed delightedly—absolutely ignoring the stranger—which was indeed a habit he was given to. Daphne rose, looking at him closely and steadily, but at the same time clutching at a chair-back to keep herself from tottering. But—perhaps it was Roger's presence—she felt stronger in herself, surer of and clearer in her judgments than at any time before in her life.

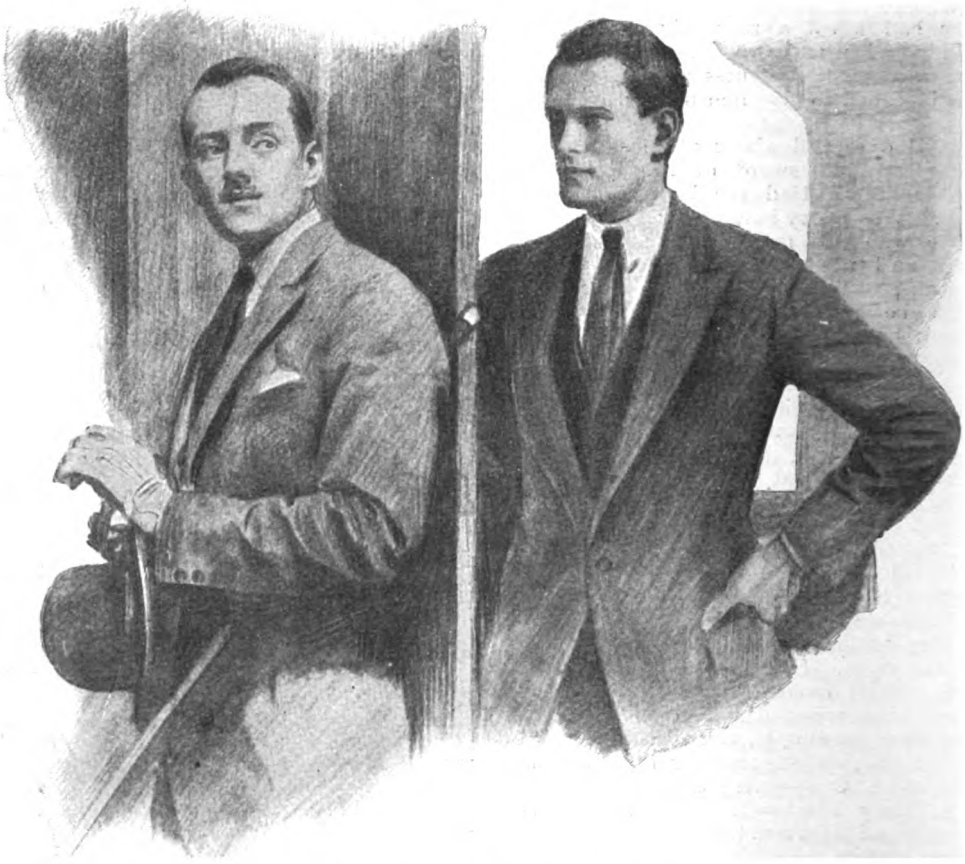
"You say this was a hoax, Harry?" she managed, after a little silence.

"Why, of course it was!"

"A mere piece of acting?"

"I should call it a jolly *good* piece!"

"For a bet—about my loyalty to you?"



"Well, I fancy I'm *de trop* here. Good-bye and good luck to both of you!" He went out swaggeringly.

"Yes—and I was right about it, old thing, wasn't I? I knew you loved me!"

"No, you didn't, Harry!"

"Didn't I?"

"No. You were right enough in thinking I'd be loyal and staunch to you in your hour of need, however great—and even to the extent of becoming, as I supposed, the helper and accomplice of a murderer. But—I am speaking deadly seriously—you were utterly wrong in believing that I loved you!"

"You—don't—love—me!" Harry Blackwell's voice and face were amazed, shaken, yet still incredulous as he looked at her.

"No, I don't. I was in love with your reputation—and your success in Belboro, and the tremendous fuss that you made of me, and got carried away very foolishly, and though I was beginning to see the tinsel side of you I should have stuck to you if—if this hadn't happened and you hadn't tried to make money out of my agony at thinking you were a murderer. But now I—quite frankly, I despise you!"

Harry gasped audibly. His pride was prodigious. He believed in himself tremendously, and he was far from being used to being talked to in this fashion by any woman. Besides, though he had pretended to ignore Roger at the outset, this "telling-off" was ten times more humiliating since delivered in another person's presence.

"Despise me!" he sneered presently. "The devil you do! Well, Daphne, if *you* don't want me, there are any number of others."

"Then hadn't you better go to them, Harry? You're only wasting time here talking!"

Daphne made a sign to Roger Treffry, who had been watching and listening very gravely. He nodded and crossed to the door and held it open. Harry Blackwell

remained looking awhile at Daphne—still absolutely amazed at the apparent *volte-face* of this woman who he had believed adored him and would suffer all for him—and then swung round on his heel. As he reached the door he stopped, dead level with Roger, and the two men—still strangers—looked each other long and full in the eyes. Neither flinched. But presently Harry shrugged his shoulders and gave a light and cynical laugh.

"Then poor old Allan was right!" he said, sneeringly. "After all, you *are* fickle, Daphne! Well, I fancy I'm *de trop* here. I'll send up those waders by a messenger. Good-bye and good luck to both of you!"

He went out swaggeringly. The door shut after him. Daphne and Roger were alone.

And then Daphne, unable to hold on a moment longer, burst into a tempest of weeping.

"It was true what I told him. I was in love with his reputation and what other people told me of his devotion to me and the immense fuss that he made of me. I thought I loved him, Roger—though I know now I ought never to have got engaged to him. I was wrong from the very outset!"

Roger comforted her—tenderly and most understandingly. Presently—her sobbing now abated—she found herself nestling in his arms.

"If you don't love him," she heard him whisper, "whom do you love, Daphne?"

"You! I've always loved you. But I was so lonely!"

Roger nodded, and drew her even yet closer to him; and she knew immense comfort and great happiness.

"Perhaps it's as well that you *have* been through all this storm and stress, old thing," she heard him say presently—very gently. "For—now you really know your own heart—we shall be far, far surer of the very biggest sort of joy—which only comes to people after suffering—which is really the finest preparation for happiness of quite the hugest kind!"

THE THING I MOST ENJOYED DOING

A Symposium of Eminent People

FAY COMPTON

The Part I Most Enjoyed Playing.

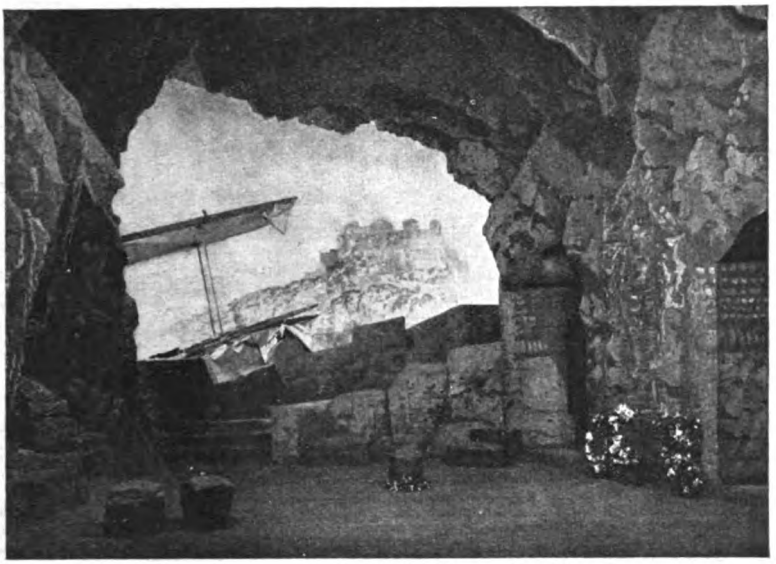
THE part I most liked playing was that of Mary Rose in Sir J. M. Barrie's play of that name. It will always be a matter of pride with me that I was given the opportunity of taking the part, which, from the personal point of view, I do not think will easily be eclipsed. I enjoyed every moment of the long run—yes, even when one day, in the Island scene, we settled down to the picnic and found that someone had blundered to the extent of forgetting to put the necessary food in the baskets. Pretending to eat, even on the stage, is a distinctly unsatisfactory business!

Fay Compton as Mary Rose.

Photo. Foulsham & Banfield.

JOSEPH HARKER

The Scene I Most Enjoyed Painting.



The Castle scene in "The Green Goddess."

Stage Photo. Co.

LOOKING back, so many of my scenic efforts spring to mind as being among the most enjoyable that I do not find it easy to choose between them. "Mameena," for example, Rider Haggard's play, done at the Globe Theatre, gave me a chance which I do not think has been surpassed. Unhappily, the war intervened and brought the production to an untimely end; otherwise, I still think that it would have been Oscar Asche's biggest success.

Again, I have none but the pleasantest memories of Sir James Barrie's first play, "Walker, London." Its one scene, showing a houseboat moored in a Thames backwater, near Cliveden Woods, was delightful to work on, and was most generously praised, I remember, by Clement Scott in his review of the play.

Then there was the coast of Wales scene in "Richard II." at His Majesty's Theatre; that was a pleasurable task. Tree was not exactly enthusiastic about it, but my friend, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, wrote me a kindly note, commending the scene, and so I did not worry!

"Chu Chin Chow" is a landmark in my painting career. The scene that afforded me the keenest pleasure to carry out was that of the Oasis. Over and above these, there were the Pyramid scene in "Cairo" and the Founders' Day scene in "Colonel Newcome"; also the Temple scene in "Bella-Donna." Each of these yielded me a very great deal of satisfaction in designing and painting it.

But if my choice is to be confined to plays "now showing," as the cinema people have it, I should plump for "The Green Goddess," with its Castle scene, which I thoroughly enjoyed painting. Mr. William Archer was good enough to say in a recent letter to me that he valued this scene, from his point of view, that of the author, because "it helps enormously by enabling people to realize the sort of building in which the rest of the action passes. It is a grand piece of architecture—far more effective than the Palace at Udaipur which I had in mind."

It is so seldom that authors trouble to state their views to that struggling entity in the theatre, the scene-painter, that I hope I shall not be charged with being unduly egotistical by quoting from the famous dramatist's letter, which, I gladly confess, added considerably to the pleasure derived from painting the scene in question.

Joseph Harker at work.

SIR LANDON RONALD

Photo. Claude Harris.

The Composition I Most Enjoy Conducting.

IT would be quite impossible for me to name any one particular composition which affords me most pleasure to conduct, and I am certain that my colleagues would be in agreement with me. It is quite true that there is an awful lot of bad music in the world, but, thank God, we have more than enough really great music to make up for it! And when it comes to conducting the great classic and modern masterpieces, it is generally my experience that it is the last work I happen to perform which I consider my favourite.

I don't think that as a rule conductors have favourite composers or favourite works. Of course, we all have our preferences; this is only human. Sir Thomas Beecham probably prefers a Mozart opera to one by Verdi. Sir Henry Wood may prefer a Brahms Symphony to one by Gustav Mahler, and, personally, give me a work by Elgar every time, instead of Stravinsky, and so on.

I conclude as I began, namely, that it would be impossible for me to name any particular composition that affords me most pleasure in conducting, simply because I love conducting *all* great music.

Camera portrait by Hoppé.

MAY SINCLAIR

The Book I Most Enjoyed Writing.

I THINK "Mary Olivier" is my best novel; it is certainly the one that gave me most pleasure, if not in writing, in having written, because it is closer to reality than anything else I have done: it gives the actual thoughts and sensations and emotions of Mary Olivier without analysis and without any intervention of the author.

Reality is the supreme test of a book's quality.

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON

The Book I Most Enjoyed Writing.

THE only one of my books in which I can say I have pleasure and satisfaction is—always—my next book. What happens is that, as I believe the first few pages of my novels will show, I set out on a new book aloofly and dispassionately, and, too, with high belief, pleasure, and satisfaction. Almost at once the thing engulfs me, and emerging at the end I always know that I have again just missed it: that the thing I was after has again eluded me; so I sigh and move on to the next one: that really is going to please and satisfy me—my next one.

I suppose the time will come—probably very soon—when I shall feel incapable of bettering a book already written. That will be either because I shall then be more easily satisfied, or because the power to try better will have departed. Till then, yes, the book that gives me most satisfaction is—always—my next book. These are plain truths.

It is curious to me that I do not have satisfaction and pleasure in one or other of my books already written, but it is the fact.

Photo. Keystone View Co.

H. H. HILTON

The Round of Golf I Most Enjoyed.

I AM asked to state the particular round of golf that supplied me with the greatest degree of enjoyment and satisfaction in the playing. I do not find the question at all easy to answer.

I have played very many friendly games which have given me infinite enjoyment. On the other hand, it is difficult to remember

The Thing I Most Enjoyed Doing

Photo. Sport & General.

HAROLD
H. HILTON

a game in a big and important event from which I can candidly say that I have derived the same amount of pleasure.

One really cannot *enjoy* a round in a championship, at least not in the lighter spirit. There is more of the spirit of anxiety than of joy in such a contest. But certainly afterwards there may be, on reflection and introspection, a wonderful degree of satisfaction to be derived from the feats one has accomplished.

The game which, on the whole, I think I may perhaps candidly say I thoroughly enjoyed and felt most satisfied with was an International match between Scotland and England at an Irish Championship meeting. But the spirit in which I review the game in question is akin to that of the Red Indian, who, we are told, never forgets and is not prone to forgive!

A year or two previously the Scottish opponent I had to meet had very narrowly defeated me in the semi-final round of an important event. At the conclusion of this match a fellow-Scot congratulated my opponent, and I overheard the latter say: "I could do it every time—I should have won much more easily."

Well, I cherished that remark. It burnt into my soul, and, as I have said, I got an opportunity to vindicate myself a couple of years later, in the aforementioned International game.

I holed a long putt on the first green, and won the hole. I laid my opponent a stymie at the second, and won that. By his conversation I knew that I had got him "snowed under," as we say, and went relentlessly on my way with the smile of the tiger on my face, piling up my opponent's agony, until at the eighteenth I stood no less than ten up.

I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of that match!

But the round which afforded me the greatest degree of what I may perhaps call reflective satisfaction was the final round which I played in the Open Championship at Hoylake some years ago.

In the first place, many people had suggested that when I had won the Open Championship in 1892 it was a fluke. That rankled. In 1897 I stood in the position of being one stroke behind the leader at the end of the first day's play. In the third round my game fell sadly away and I lost my position.

In the final round I began operations at a very swift gait: then for four holes I could do nothing right. Then came another "bunch of fireworks," and I finished in seventy-five, which was just good enough.

The satisfaction came in the sense that I had indubitably proved that 1892 was not a fluke.

But for pure, unalloyed enjoyment give me a good foursome, or a good four-baller, which is played in a friendly spirit and which finishes on the last green!

Photo. Swaine.

MARK HAMBOURG

The Piece I Most Enjoy Playing.

THE work which, of all others, I had most ambition to learn when a boy, and, consequently, that which gave me most pleasure in studying when I came to it, is the Sonata, Op. III., of Beethoven. It is one of the noblest of Beethoven's great pianoforte creations, and as such it has always appealed particularly to me. I find in it every possible artistic satisfaction.

SIR G. DU MAURIER

The Part I Most Enjoyed Playing.

IT is almost impossible to say which is one's favourite part, as it rather looks as if you fancied yourself in it, a fact which the audience would discover immediately, and take a healthy dislike to you, and rightly so. What are known as "straight" parts are the most difficult, as one has to try to be natural, which is only possible in the bathroom. Happy is the character actor who is allowed to disguise himself with a heavy moustache, a false nose, blue spectacles, and two or three teeth missing, carrying a large cigar in one hand and a sunshade in the other—General McSnorter, of the Punjaub Dragoons, if you please. All that he has to do is to cough and splutter and say "Damme." This is always called a perfect little gem of a performance by the critics.

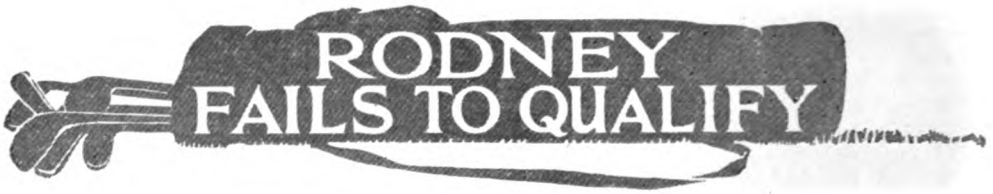
But to carry a play in a grey suit, and then a blue suit, and a smoking jacket in the last act, and to say, "Thank God! Helen has gone, but I still have my work," just as the curtain falls, requires genius, sheer genius.

I would rather decline saying which is actually my favourite part, unless perhaps it was that of a young man in a railway carriage on his honeymoon—I have forgotten what the name of the piece was—we played it in a tent at the Theatrical Garden Party one year: six times in one afternoon. The girl who took the part of the young bride was—well, frightfully attractive!

But if ever I am pressed to state my favourite part I don't mind admitting that I am as fond of the *rôle* of Captain Hook, in "Peter Pan," as of any. This is because I am very keen about pirates.

Sir Gerald du Maurier as Captain Hook.

By permission of "The Tatler."



by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY
A. WALLIS MILLS

THERE was a sound of revelry by night, for the first Saturday in June had arrived and the Golf Club was holding its monthly dance. Fairy lanterns festooned the branches of the chestnut trees on the terrace above the ninth green, and from the big dining-room, cleared now of its tables and chairs, came a muffled slithering of feet and the plaintive sound of saxophones moaning softly like a man who has just missed a short putt. In a basket-chair in the shadows the Oldest Member puffed a cigar and listened, well content. His was the peace of the man who has reached the age when he is no longer expected to dance.

A door opened, and a young man came out of the club-house. He stood on the steps with folded arms, gazing to left and right. The Oldest Member, watching him from the darkness, noted that he wore an air of gloom. His brow was furrowed and he had the indefinable look of one who has been smitten in the spiritual solar plexus.

Yes, where all around him was joy, jollity, and song, this young man brooded.

The sound of a high tenor voice, talking rapidly and entertainingly on the subject of modern Russian thought, now intruded itself on the peace of the night. From the farther end of the terrace a girl came into the light of the lanterns, her arm in that of a second young man. She was small and pretty, he tall and intellectual. The light shone on his high forehead and glittered on his tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles. The girl was gazing up at him with reverence and adoration, and at the sight of these twain the youth on the steps appeared to undergo some sort of spasm. His face became contorted and he wobbled. Then, with a gesture of sublime despair, he tripped over the mat and stumbled back into the club-house. The couple passed on and disappeared, and the Oldest Member had the night to himself, until the door opened once more and the club's courteous and efficient secretary trotted down the steps. The scent of the cigar drew him to where the Oldest Member sat, and he dropped into the chair beside him.

"Seen young Ramage to-night?" asked the secretary.

"He was standing on those steps only a moment ago," replied the Oldest Member. "Why do you ask?"

"I thought perhaps you might have had a talk with him and found out what's the matter. Can't think what's come to him to-night. Nice, civil boy as a rule, but just now, when I was trying to tell him about my short approach on the fifth this afternoon, he was positively abrupt. Gave a sort of hollow gasp and dashed away in the middle of a sentence."

The Oldest Member sighed.

"You must overlook his brusqueness," he said. "The poor lad is passing through a trying time. A short while back I was the spectator of a little drama that explains everything. Mabel Patmore is flirting disgracefully with that young fellow Purvis."

"Purvis? Oh, you mean the man who won the club Bowls Championship last week?"

"I can quite believe that he may have disgraced himself in the manner you describe," said the Sage, coldly. "I know he plays

Copyright, 1924, by P. G. Wodehouse.

that noxious game. And it is for that reason that I hate to see a nice girl like Mabel Patmore, who only needs a little more steadiness off the tee to become a very fair golfer, wasting her time on him. I suppose his attraction lies in the fact that he has a great flow of conversation, while poor Ramage is, one must admit, more or less of a dumb Isaac. Girls are too often snared by a glib tongue. Still, it is a pity, a great pity. The whole affair recalls irresistibly to my mind the story——"

The secretary rose with a whir like a rocketing pheasant.

"——the story," continued the Sage, "of Jane Packard; William Bates, and Rodney Spelvin—which, as you have never heard it, I will now proceed to relate."

"Can't stop now, much as I should like——"

"It is a theory of mine," proceeded the Oldest Member, attaching himself to the other's coat-tails and pulling him gently back into his seat, "that nothing but misery can come of the union between a golfer and an outcast whose soul has not been purified by the noblest of games. This is well exemplified by the story of Jane Packard, William Bates, and Rodney Spelvin."

"All sorts of things to look after——"

"That is why I am hoping so sincerely that there is nothing more serious than a temporary flirtation in this business of Mabel Patmore and bowls-playing Purvis. A girl in whose life golf has become a factor would be mad to trust her happiness to a blister whose idea of enjoyment is trundling wooden balls across a lawn. Sooner or later he is certain to fail her in some crisis. Lucky for her if this failure occurs before the marriage knot has been inextricably tied and so opens her eyes to his inadequacy—as was the case in the matter of Jane Packard, William Bates, and Rodney Spelvin. I will now," said the Oldest Member, "tell you all about Jane Packard, William Bates, and Rodney Spelvin."

The secretary uttered a choking groan.

"I shall miss the next dance," he pleaded.

"A bit of luck for some nice girl," said the Sage, equably.

He tightened his grip on the other's arm.

JANE PACKARD and William Bates (said the Oldest Member) were not, you must understand, officially engaged. They had grown up together from childhood, and there existed between them a sort of understanding—the understanding being that, if ever William could speed himself up enough to propose, Jane would accept him, and they would settle down and live stodgily and happily ever after. For William was not one of your rapid wooers. In his affair of the heart he moved somewhat slowly and ponderously, like a motor-lorry, an object which both in physique and temperament he greatly resembled. He was an extraordinarily large, powerful, ox-like young man, who required plenty of time to make up his mind about any given problem. I have seen him in the club dining-room musing with a thoughtful frown for fifteen minutes on end while endeavouring to weigh the rival merits of a chump chop and a sirloin steak as a luncheon dish. A placid, leisurely man. I might almost call him lymphatic. I *will* call him lymphatic. He was lymphatic.

The first glimmering of an idea that Jane might possibly be a suitable wife for him had come to William some three years before this story opens. Having brooded on the matter tensely for six months, he then sent her a bunch of roses. In the October of the following year, nothing having occurred to alter his growing conviction that she was an attractive girl, he presented her with a two-pound box of assorted chocolates. And from then on his progress, though not rapid, was continuous, and there seemed little reason to doubt that, should nothing come about to weaken Jane's regard for him, another five years or so would see the matter settled.

And it did not appear likely that anything would weaken Jane's regard. They had much in common, for she was a calm, slow-moving person too. They had a mutual devotion to golf, and played together every day; and the fact that their handicaps were practically level formed a strong bond. Most divorces, as you know, spring from the fact that the husband is too markedly superior to his wife at golf; this leading him, when she starts criticizing his relations, to say bitter and unforgivable things about her mashie-shots. Nothing of this kind could happen with William and Jane. They would build their life on a solid foundation of sympathy and understanding. The years would find them consoling and encouraging each other, happy married lovers. If, that is to say, William ever got round to proposing.

It was not until the fourth year of this romance that I detected the first sign of any alteration in the schedule. I had happened to call on the Packards one afternoon and found them all out except Jane. She gave me tea and conversed for a while, but she seemed distrait. I had known her since she wore rompers, so felt entitled to ask if there was anything wrong.

"Not exactly wrong," said Jane, and she heaved a sigh.

"Tell me," I said.

She heaved another sigh.

"Have you ever read 'The Love That

Scorches,' by Luella Periton Phipps ? " she asked.

I said I had not.

" I got it out of the library yesterday," said Jane, dreamily, " and finished it at three this morning in bed. It is a very, very beautiful book. It is all about the desert and people riding on camels and a wonderful Arab chief with stern yet tender eyes and a girl called Angela and oases and dates and mirages and all like that. There is a chapter where the Arab chief seizes the girl and clasps her in his arms and she feels his hot breath searing her face and he flings her on his horse and they ride off and all around was sand and night and the mysterious stars. And somehow—oh, I don't know——"

She gazed yearningly at the chandelier.

" I wish mother would take me to Algiers next winter," she murmured, absently. " It would do her rheumatism so much good."

I went away frankly uneasy. These novelists, I felt, ought to be more careful. They put ideas into girls' heads and made them dissatisfied. I determined to look William up and give him a kindly word of advice. It was no business of mine, you may say, but they were so ideally suited to one another that it seemed a tragedy that anything should come between them. And Jane was in a strange mood. At any moment, I felt, she might take a good, square look at William and wonder what she could ever have seen in him. I hurried to the boy's cottage.

" William," I said, " as one who dandled you on his knee when you were a baby, I wish to ask you a personal question. Answer me this, and make it snappy. Do you love Jane Packard ? "

A look of surprise came into his face, followed by one of intense thought. He was silent for a space.

" Who, me ? " he said at length.

" Yes, you."

" Jane Packard ? "

" Yes, Jane Packard."

" Do I love Jane Packard ? " said William, assembling the material and arranging it neatly in his mind.

He pondered for perhaps five minutes.

" Why, of course I do," he said.

" Splendid ! "

" Devotedly, dash it ! "

" Capital ! "

" You might say madly."

I tapped him on his barrel-like chest.

" Then my advice to you, William Bates, is to tell her so."

" Now that's rather a brainy scheme," said William, looking at me admiringly. " I see exactly what you're driving at. You mean it would kind of settle things, and all that ? "

" Precisely."

" Well, I've got to go away for a couple of days to-morrow—it's the Invitation Tournament at Squashy Hollow—but I'll be back on Wednesday. Suppose I take her out on the links on Wednesday and propose ? "

" A very good idea."

" At the sixth hole, say ? "

" At the sixth hole would do excellently."

" Or the seventh ? "

" The sixth would be better. The ground slopes from the tee, and you would be hidden from view by the dog-leg turn."

" Something in that."

" My own suggestion would be that you somehow contrive to lead her into that large bunker to the left of the seventh fairway."

" Why ? "

" I have reason to believe that Jane would respond more readily to your wooing were it conducted in some vast sandy waste. And there is another thing," I proceeded, earnestly, " which I must impress upon you. See that there is nothing tame or tepid about your behaviour when you propose. You must show zip and romance. In fact, I strongly recommend you, before you even say a word to her, to seize her and clasp her in your arms and let your hot breath sear her face."

" Who, me ? " said William.

" Believe me, it is what will appeal to her most."

" But, I say ! Hot breath, I mean ! Dash it all, you know, what ? "

" I assure you it is indispensable."

" Seize her ? " said William, blankly.

" Precisely."

" Clasp her in my arms ? "

" Just so."

William plunged into silent thought once more.

" Well, you *know*, I suppose," he said at length. " You've had experience, I take it. Still—— Oh, all right, I'll have a stab at it."

" There spoke the true William Bates ! " I said. " Go to it, lad, and Heaven speed your wooing ! "

IN all human schemes—and it is this that so often brings failure to the subtlest strategists—there is always the chance of the Unknown Factor popping up, that unforeseen X for which we have made no allowance and which throws our whole plan of campaign out of gear. I had not anticipated anything of the kind coming along to mar the arrangements on the present occasion ; but when I reached the first tee on the Wednesday afternoon to give William

Bates that last word of encouragement which means so much, I saw that I had been too sanguine. William had not yet arrived, but Jane was there, and with her a tall, slim, dark-haired, sickeningly romantic-looking youth in faultlessly-fitting serge. A stranger to me. He was talking to her in a musical undertone, and she seemed to be hanging on his words. Her beautiful eyes were fixed on his face, and her lips slightly parted. So absorbed was she that it was not until I spoke that she became aware of my presence.

"William not arrived yet?"

She turned with a start.

"William? Hasn't he? Oh! No, not yet. I don't suppose he will be long. I want to introduce you to Mr. Spelvin. He has come to stay with the Wyndhams for a few weeks. He is going to walk round with us."

Naturally this information came as a shock to me, but I masked my feelings and greeted the young man with a well-assumed cordiality.

"Mr. George Spelvin, the actor?" I asked, shaking hands.

"My cousin," he said. "My name is Rodney Spelvin. I do not share George's histrionic ambitions. If I have any claim to—may I say renown?—it is as a maker of harmonies."

"A composer, eh?"

"Verbal harmonies," explained Mr. Spelvin. "I am, in my humble fashion, a poet."

"He writes the most beautiful poetry," said Jane, warmly. "He has just been reciting some of it to me."

"And," I proceeded, earnestly, "see that there is nothing tame or tepid about your behaviour when you propose."

"Oh, that little thing?" said Mr. Spelvin, deprecatingly. "A mere *morceau*. One of my juvenilia."

"It was too beautiful for words," persisted Jane.

"Ah, you," said Mr. Spelvin, "have the soul to appreciate it. I could wish that there were more like you, Miss Packard. We singers have much to put up with in a crass and materialistic world. Only last week a man, a coarse editor, asked me what my sonnet, 'Wine of Desire,' *meant*." He laughed indulgently. "I gave him answer, 'twas a sonnet, not a mining prospectus."

"It would have served him right," said Jane, heatedly, "if you had pasted him one on the snoot!"

At this point a low whistle behind me attracted my attention, and I turned to perceive William Bates towering against the sky-line.

"Hoy!" said William.

I walked to where he stood, leaving Jane

and Mr. Spelvin in earnest conversation with their heads close together.

"I say," said William, in a rumbling undertone, "who's the bird with Jane?"

"A man named Spelvin. He is visiting the Wyndhams. I suppose Mrs. Wyndham made them acquainted."

"Looks a bit of a Gawd-help-us," said William, critically.

"He is going to walk round with you."

It was impossible for a man of William Bates's temperament to start, but his face took on a look of faint concern.

"Walk round with us?"

"So Jane said."

"But look here," said William. "I can't possibly seize her and clasp her in my arms and do all that hot-breath stuff with this pie-faced exhibit hanging round on the outskirts."

"No, I fear not."

"Postpone it, then, what?" said William, with unmistakable relief. "Well, as a matter of fact, it's probably a good thing. There was a most extraordinarily fine steak-and-kidney pudding at lunch, and, between ourselves, I'm not feeling what you might call keyed up to anything in the nature of a romantic scene. Some other time, eh?"

I looked at Jane and the Spelvin youth, and a nameless apprehension swept over me. There was something in their attitude which I found alarming. I was just about to whisper a warning to William not to treat this new arrival too lightly, when Jane caught sight of him and called him over, and a moment later they set out on their round.

I walked away pensively. This Spelvin's advent, coming immediately on top of that book of desert love, was undeniably sinister. My heart sank for William, and I waited at the club-house to have a word with him after his match. He came in two hours later, flushed and jubilant.

"Played the game of my life!" he said. "We didn't hole out all the putts, but, making allowance for everything, you can chalk me up an eighty-three. Not so bad, eh? You know the eighth hole? Well, I was a bit short with my drive, and found my ball lying badly for the brassy, so I took my driving-iron and with a nice easy swing let the pill have it so squarely on the seat of the pants that it flew——"

"Where is Jane?" I interrupted.

"Jane? Oh, the bloke Spelvin has taken her home."

"Beware of him, William!" I whispered, tensely. "Have a care, young Bates! If you don't look out, you'll have him stealing Jane from you. Don't laugh. Remember that I saw them together before you arrived. She was gazing into his eyes as a desert maiden might gaze into the eyes of a sheik. You don't seem to realize, wretched William Bates, that Jane is an extremely romantic girl. A fascinating stranger like this, coming suddenly into her life, may well snatch her away from you before you know where you are."

"That's all right," said William, lightly. "I don't mind admitting that the same idea occurred to me. But I made judicious inquiries on the way round, and found out that the fellow's a poet. You don't seriously expect me to believe that there's any chance of Jane falling in love with a poet?"

He spoke incredulously, for there were three things in the world that he held in the smallest esteem—slugs, poets, and caddies with hiccups.

"I think it extremely possible, if not probable," I replied.

"Nonsense!" said William. "And, besides, the man doesn't play golf. Never had a club in his hand, and says he never wants to. That's the sort of fellow he is."

At this, I confess, I did experience a distinct feeling of relief. I could imagine Jane Packard, stimulated by exotic literature, committing many follies, but I was compelled to own that I could not conceive of her giving her heart to one who not only did not play golf but had no desire to play it. Such a man, to a girl of her fine nature and correct upbringing, would be beyond the pale. I walked home with William in a calm and happy frame of mind.

I was to learn but one short week later that Woman is the unfathomable, incalculable mystery, the problem we men can never hope to solve.

THE week that followed was one of much festivity in our village. There were dances, picnics, bathing-parties, and all the other adjuncts of high summer. In these William Bates played but a minor part. Dancing was not one of his gifts. He swung, if called upon, an amiable shoe, but the disposition in the neighbourhood was to refrain from calling upon him; for he had an incurable habit of coming down with his full weight upon his partner's toes, and many a fair girl had had to lie up for a couple of days after collaborating with him in a fox-trot.

Picnics, again, bored him, and he always preferred a round on the links to the merriest bathing-party. The consequence was that he kept practically aloof from the revels, and all through the week Jane Packard was squired by Rodney Spelvin. With Spelvin she swayed over the waxed floor; with Spelvin she dived and swam; and it was Spelvin who with zealous hand brushed

ants off her mayonnaise and squashed wasps with a chivalrous teaspoon. The end was inevitable. Apart from anything else, the moon was at its full and many of these picnics were held at night. And you know what that means. It was about ten days later that William Bates came to me in my little garden with an expression on his face like a man who didn't know it was loaded.

"I say," said William, "you busy?"

I emptied the remainder of the water-can on the lobelias, and was at his disposal.

"I say," said William, "rather a rotten thing has happened. You know Jane?"

I said I knew Jane.

"You know Spelvin?"

I said I knew Spelvin.

"Well, Jane's gone and got engaged to him," said William, aggrieved.

"What?"

"It's a fact."

"Already?"

"Absolutely. She told me this morning. And what I want to know," said the stricken boy, sitting down thoroughly unnerved on a basket of strawberries, "is, where do I get off?"

My heart bled for him, but I could not help reminding him that I had anticipated this.

"You should not have left them so much alone together," I said. "You must have known that there is nothing more conducive to love than the moon in June. Why, songs have been written about it. In fact, I cannot at the moment recall a song that has not been written about it."

"Yes, but how was I to guess that anything like this would happen?" cried William, rising and scraping strawberries off his person. "Who would ever have supposed Jane Packard would leap off the dock with a fellow who doesn't play golf?"

"Certainly, as you say, it seems almost incredible. You are sure you heard her correctly? When she told you about the engagement, I mean. There was no chance that you could have misunderstood?"

"Not a bit of it. As a matter of fact, what led up to the thing, if you know what I mean, was me proposing to her myself. I'd been thinking a lot during the last ten days over what you said to me about that, and the more I thought of it the more of a sound egg the notion seemed. So I got her alone up at the club-house and said, 'I say, old girl, what about it?' and she said, 'What about what?' and I said, 'What about marrying me? Don't if you don't want to, of course,' I said, 'but I'm bound to say it looks pretty good to me.' And then she said she loved another—this bloke Spelvin, to wit. A nasty jar, I can tell you, it was. I was just starting off on a round, and it made me hook my putts on every green."

"But did she say specifically that she was engaged to Spelvin?"

"She said she loved him."

"There may be hope. If she is not irrevocably engaged the fancy may pass. I think I will go and see Jane and make tactful inquiries."

"I wish you would," said William. "And, I say, you haven't any stuff that'll take strawberry-juice off a fellow's trousers, have you?"

MY interview with Jane that evening served only to confirm the bad news. Yes, she was definitely engaged to the man Spelvin. In a burst of girlish confidence she told me some of the details of the affair.

"The moon was shining and a soft breeze played in the trees," she said. "And suddenly he took me in his arms, gazed deep into my eyes, and cried, 'I love you! I worship you! I adore you! You are the tree on which the fruit of my life hangs; my mate; my woman; predestined to me since the first star shone up in yonder sky!'"

"Nothing," I agreed, "could be fairer than that. And then?" I said, thinking how different it all must have been from William Bates's miserable, limping proposal.

"Then we fixed it up that we would get married in September."

"You are sure you are doing wisely?" I ventured.

Her eyes opened.

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, you know, whatever his other merits—and no doubt they are numerous—Rodney Spelvin does *not* play golf."

"No, but he's very broad-minded about it."

I shuddered. Women say these things so lightly.

"Broad-minded?"

"Yes. He has no objection to my going on playing. He says he likes my pretty enthusiasms."

There seemed nothing more to say on that subject.

"Well," I said, "I am sure I wish you every happiness. I had hoped, of course—but never mind that."

"What?"

"I had hoped, as you insist on my saying it, that you and William Bates——"

A shadow passed over her face. Her eyes grew sad.

"Poor William! I'm awfully sorry about that. He's a dear."

"A splendid fellow," I agreed.

"He has been so wonderful about the whole thing. So many men would have gone off and shot grizzly bears or something. But William just said 'Right-o!' in a quiet voice, and he's going to caddy for me at Mossy Heath next week."

"There is good stuff in the boy."

"Yes." She sighed. "If it wasn't for Rodney—— Oh, well!"

I thought it would be tactful to change the subject.

"So you have decided to go to Mossy Heath again?"

"Yes. And I'm really going to qualify this year."

THE annual Invitation Tournament at Mossy Heath was one of the most important fixtures of our local female golfing year. As is usual with these affairs, it began with a medal-play qualifying round, the thirty-two players with the lowest net scores then proceeding to fight it out during the remainder of the week by match-play. It gratified me to hear Jane speak so confidently of her chances, for this was the fourth year she had entered, and each time, though she had started out with the brightest prospects, she had failed to survive the qualifying round. Like so many golfers, she was fifty per cent. better at match-play than at medal-play. Mossy Heath, being a championship course, is full of nasty pitfalls, and on each of the three occasions on which she had tackled it one very bad hole had undone all her steady work on the other seventeen and ruined her card. I was delighted to find her so undismayed by failure.

"I am sure you will," I said. "Just play your usual careful game."

"It doesn't matter what sort of a game I play this time," said Jane, jubilantly. "I've just heard that there are only thirty-two entries this year, so that everybody who finishes is bound to qualify. I have simply got to get round somehow, and there I am."

"It would seem somewhat superfluous in these circumstances to play a qualifying round at all."

"Oh, but they must. You see, there are prizes for the best three scores, so they have to play it. But isn't it a relief to know that, even if I come to grief on that beastly seventh, as I did last year, I shall still be all right?"

"It is, indeed. I have a feeling that once it becomes a matter of match-play you will be irresistible."

"I do hope so. It would be lovely to win with Rodney looking on."

"Will he be looking on?"

"Yes. He's going to walk round with me. Isn't it sweet of him?"

Her *fiancé's* name having slid into the conversation again, she seemed inclined to become eloquent about him. I left her, however, before she could begin. To one so strongly pro-William as myself, eulogistic prattle about Rodney Spelvin was repugnant. I disapproved entirely of this infatuation of hers. I am not a narrow-minded man; I quite appreciate the fact that non-golfers are entitled to marry; but I could not countenance their marrying potential winners of the Ladies' Invitation Tournament at Mossy Heath.

The Greens Committee, as greens committees are so apt to do in order to justify their existence, have altered the Mossy Heath course considerably since the time of which I am speaking, but they have left the three most poisonous holes untouched. I refer to the fourth, the seventh, and the fifteenth. Even a soulless Greens Committee seems to have realized that golfers, long-suffering though they are, can be pushed too far, and that the addition of even a single extra bunker to any of these dreadful places would probably lead to armed riots in the club-house.

Jane Packard had done well on the first three holes, but as she stood on the fourth tee she was conscious, despite the fact that this seemed to be one of her good days, of a certain nervousness; and oddly enough, great as was her love for Rodney Spelvin, it was not his presence that gave her courage, but the sight of William Bates's large, friendly face and the sound of his pleasant voice urging her to keep her bean down and refrain from pressing.

As a matter of fact, to be perfectly truthful, there was beginning already to germinate within her by this time a faint but definite regret that Rodney Spelvin had decided to accompany her on this qualifying round. It was sweet of him to bother to come, no doubt, but still there was something about Rodney that did not seem to blend with the holy atmosphere of a championship course. He was the one romance of her life and their souls were bound together for all eternity, but the fact remained that he did not appear to be able to keep still while she was making her shots, and his light humming, musical though it was, militated against accuracy on the green. He was humming now as she addressed her ball, and for an instant a spasm of irritation shot through her. She fought it down bravely and concentrated on her drive, and when the ball soared over the cross-bunker she forgot her annoyance. There is nothing so mellowing, so conducive to sweet and genial thoughts, as

a real juicy one straight down the middle, and this was a pipterino.

"Nice work," said William Bates, approvingly.

Jane gave him a grateful smile and turned to Rodney. It was his appreciation that she wanted. He was not a golfer, but even he must be able to see that her drive had been something out of the common.

Jane's ball shot past the hole and rolled on about three yards. She spun round in anguish. Rodney was pointing at the horizon. "What a bit of colour!" he cried.

Rodney Spelvin was standing with his back turned, gazing out over the rolling prospect, one hand shading his eyes.

"That vista there," said Rodney. "That calm wooded hollow bathed in the golden sunshine. It reminds me of the island valley of Avilion——"

"Did you see my drive, Rodney?"

"——where falls not rain nor hail nor any snow, nor ever wind blows loudly. Eh? Your drive? No, I didn't."

Again Jane Packard was aware of that faint, wistful regret. But this was swept away a few moments later in the ecstasy of a perfect iron-shot which plunked her ball nicely on to the green. The last time she had played this hole she had taken seven, for all round the plateau green are sinister sand-bunkers, each beckoning the ball into its hideous depths; and now she was on in two and life was very sweet. Putting was her strong point, so that there was no reason why she should not get a snappy four on one of the nastiest holes on the course. She glowed with a strange emotion as she took her putter, and as she bent over her ball the air seemed filled with soft music.

It was only when she started to concentrate on the line of her putt that this soft music began to bother her. Then, listening, she became aware that it proceeded from Rodney Spelvin. He was standing immediately behind her, humming an old French love-song. It was the sort of old French love-song to which she could have listened for hours in some scented garden under the young May moon, but on the green of the fourth at Mossy Heath it got right in amongst her nerve-centres.

"Rodney, *please!*"

"Eh?"

Jane found herself wishing that Rodney Spelvin would not say "Eh?" whenever she spoke to him.

"Do you mind not humming?" said Jane. "I want to putt."

"Putt on, child, putt on," said Rodney

Spelvin, indulgently. "I don't know what you mean, but, if it makes you happy to putt, putt to your heart's content."

Jane bent over her ball again. She had got the line now. She brought back her putter with infinite care.

"My God!" exclaimed Rodney Spelvin, going off like a bomb.

Jane's ball, sharply jabbed, shot past the hole and rolled on about three yards. She spun round in anguish. Rodney Spelvin was pointing at the horizon.

"*What* a bit of colour!" he cried. "Did you ever see such a bit of colour?"

"Oh, Rodney!" moaned Jane.

"Eh?"

Jane gulped and walked to her ball. Her fourth putt trickled into the hole.

"Did you win?" said Rodney Spelvin, amiably.

Jane walked to the fifth tee in silence.

THE fifth and sixth holes at Mossy Heath are long, but they offer little trouble to those who are able to keep straight. It is as if the architect of the course had relaxed over these two in order to ensure that his malignant mind should be at its freshest and keenest when he came to design the pestilential seventh. This seventh, as you may remember, is the hole at which Sandy McHoots, then Open Champion, took an eleven on an important occasion. It is a short hole, and a full mashie will take you nicely on to the green, provided you can carry the river that frolics just beyond the tee and seems to plead with you to throw it a ball to play with. Once on the green, however, the problem is to stay there. The green itself is about the size of a drawing-room carpet, and in the summer, when the ground is hard, a ball that has not the maximum of back-spin is apt to touch lightly and bound off into the river beyond; for this is an island green, where the stream bends like a serpent. I refresh your memory with these facts in order that you may appreciate to the full what Jane Packard was up against.

The woman with whom Jane was partnered had the honour, and drove a nice high ball which fell into one of the bunkers to the left. She was a silent, patient-looking woman, and she seemed to regard this as perfectly satisfactory. She withdrew from the tee and made way for Jane.

"Nice work!" said William Bates, a moment later. For Jane's ball, soaring in a perfect arc, was dropping, it seemed, on the very pin.

"Oh, Rodney, look!" cried Jane.

"Eh?" said Rodney Spelvin.

His remark was drowned in a passionate squeal of agony from his betrothed. The most poignant of all tragedies had occurred. The ball, touching the green, leaped like a young lamb, scuttled past the pin, and took a running dive over the cliff.

There was a silence. Jane's partner, who was seated on the bench by the sand-box reading a pocket edition in limp leather of Vardon's "What Every Young Golfer Should Know," with which she had been refreshing herself at odd moments all through the round, had not observed the incident. William Bates, with the tact of a true golfer, refrained from comment. Jane was herself swallowing painfully. It was left to Rodney Spelvin to break the silence.

"Good!" he said.

Jane Packard turned like a stepped-on worm.

"What do you mean, good?"

"You hit your ball farther than she did."

"I sent it into the river," said Jane, in a low, toneless voice.

"Capital!" said Rodney Spelvin, delicately masking a yawn with two fingers of his shapely right hand. "Capital! Capital!"

Her face contorted with pain, Jane put down another ball.

"Playing three," she said.

The student of Vardon marked the place in her book with her thumb, looked up, nodded, and resumed her reading.

"Nice w——" began William Bates, as the ball soared off the tee, and checked himself abruptly. Already he could see that the unfortunate girl had put too little beef into it. The ball was falling, falling. It fell. A crystal fountain flashed up towards the sun. The ball lay floating on the bosom of the stream, only some few feet short of the island. But, as has been well pointed out, that little less and how far away!

"Playing five!" said Jane, between her teeth.

"What," inquired Rodney Spelvin, chattily, lighting a cigarette, "is the record break?"

"Playing *five*," said Jane, with a dreadful calm, and gripped her mashie.

"Half a second," said William Bates, suddenly. "I say, I believe you could play that last one from where it floats. A good crisp slosh with a niblick would put you on, and you'd be there in four, with a chance for a five. Worth trying, what? I mean, no sense in dropping strokes unless you have to."

Jane's eyes were gleaming. She threw William a look of infinite gratitude.

"Why, I believe I could!"

"Worth having a dash."

"There's a boat down there!"

"I could row," said William.

"I could stand in the middle and slosh," cried Jane.

"You hit your ball farther than she did."
"I sent it into the river," said Jane, in a low, toneless voice.
"Capital!" said Rodney, delicately masking a yawn. "Capital!"

"And what's-his-name—*that*," said William, jerking his head in the direction of Rodney Spelvin, who was strolling up and down behind the tee, humming a gay Venetian barcarolle, "could steer."

"William," said Jane, fervently, "you're a darling."

"Oh, I don't know," said William, modestly.

"There's no one like you in the world. Rodney!"

"Eh?" said Rodney Spelvin.

"We're going out in that boat. I want you to steer."

Rodney Spelvin's face showed appreciation of the change of programme. Golf bored him, but what could be nicer than a gentle row in a boat?

"Capital!" he said. "Capital! Capital!"

There was a dreamy look in Rodney Spelvin's eyes as he leaned back with the tiller-ropes in his hands. This was just his idea of the proper way of passing a summer afternoon. Drifting lazily over the silver surface of the stream. His eyes closed. He began to murmur softly.

"All to-day the slow sleek ripples hardly bear up shoreward, Charged with sighs more light than laughter, faint and fair, Like a woodland lake's weak wavelets lightly lingering forward, Soft and listless as the—— Here! Hi!"

For at this moment the silver surface of the stream was violently split by a vigorously-wielded niblick, the boat lurched drunkenly, and over his Panama-hatted head and down his grey-flannelled torso there descended a cascade of water.

"Here! Hi!" cried Rodney Spelvin.

He cleared his eyes and gazed reproachfully. Jane and William Bates were peering into the depths.

"I missed it," said Jane.

"There she spouts!" said William, pointing. "Ready?"

Jane raised her niblick.

"Here! Hi!" bleated Rodney Spelvin, as a second cascade poured damply over him.

He shook the drops off his face, and perceived that Jane was regarding him with hostility.

"I do wish you wouldn't talk just as I am swinging," she said, pettishly. "Now you've made me miss it again! If you can't keep quiet, I wish you wouldn't insist on coming round with one. Can you see it, William?"

"There she blows," said William Bates.

"Here! You aren't going to do it *again*, are you?" cried Rodney Spelvin.

Jane bared her teeth.

"I'm going to get that ball on to the green if I have to stay here all night," she said.

Rodney Spelvin looked at her and

shuddered. Was this the quiet, dreamy girl he had loved? This Mænad? Her hair was lying in damp wisps about her face, her eyes were shining with an unearthly light.

"No, but really——" he faltered.

Jane stamped her foot.

"What *are* you making all this fuss about, Rodney?" she snapped. "Where is it, William?"

"There she dips," said William. "Playing six."

"Playing six."

"Let her go!" said William.

"Let her go it is!" said Jane.

A perfect understanding seemed to prevail between these two.

Splash!

The woman on the bank looked up from her Vardon as Rodney Spelvin's agonized scream rent the air. She saw a boat upon the water, a man rowing the boat, another man, hatless, gesticulating in the stern, a girl beating the water with a niblick. She nodded placidly and understandingly. A niblick was the club she would have used herself in such circumstances. Everything appeared to her entirely regular and orthodox. She resumed her book.

Splash!

"Playing fifteen," said Jane.

"Fifteen is right," said William Bates.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

"Playing forty-four."

"Forty-four is correct."

Splash! Splash! Splash! Splash!

"Eighty-three?" said Jane, brushing the hair out of her eyes.

"No. Only eighty-two," said William Bates.

"Where is it?"

"There she drifts."

A dripping figure rose violently in the stern of the boat, spouting water like a public fountain. For what seemed to him like an eternity Rodney Spelvin had ducked and spluttered and writhed, and now it came to him abruptly that he was through. He bounded from his seat, and at the same time Jane swung with all the force of her supple body. There was a splash beside which all the other splashes had been as nothing. The boat overturned and went drifting away. Three bodies plunged into the stream. Three heads emerged from the water.

The woman on the bank looked absently in their direction. Then she resumed her book.

"It's all right," said William Bates, contentedly. "We're in our depth."

"My bag!" cried Jane. "My bag of clubs!"

"Must have sunk," said William.

"Rodney," said Jane, "my bag of clubs is at the bottom somewhere. Dive under and swim about and try to find it."

"It's bound to be around somewhere," said William Bates, encouragingly.

Rodney Spelvin drew himself up to his full height. It was not an easy thing to do, for it was muddy where he stood, but he did it.

"Damn your bag of clubs!" he bellowed, lost to all shame. "I'm going home!"

With painful steps, tripping from time to time and vanishing beneath the surface, he sloshed to the shore. For a moment he paused on the bank, silhouetted against the summer sky, then he was gone.

JANE PACKARD and William Bates watched him go with amazed eyes.

"I never would have dreamed," said Jane, dazedly, "that he was that sort of man."

"A bad lot," said William Bates.

"The sort of man to be upset by the merest trifle!"

"Must have a naturally bad disposition," said William Bates.

"Why, if a little thing like this could make him so rude and brutal and horrid, it wouldn't be *safe* to marry him!"

"Taking a big chance," agreed William Bates. "Sort of fellow who would poison the cat's milk and kick the baby in the face." He took a deep breath and disappeared. "Here are your clubs, old girl," he said, coming to the surface again. "Only wanted a bit of looking for."

"Oh, William," said Jane, "you are the most wonderful man on earth!"

"Would you go so far as that?" said William.

"I was mad, mad, ever to get engaged to that brute!"

"Now there," said William Bates, removing an eel from his left breast-pocket, "I'm absolutely with you. Thought so all along, but didn't like to say so. What I mean is, a girl like you—keen on golf and all that sort of thing—ought to marry a chap like me—keen on golf and everything of that description."

"William," cried Jane, passionately, detaching a newt from her right ear, "I will!"

"Silly nonsense, when you come right down to it, your marrying a fellow who doesn't play golf. Nothing in it."

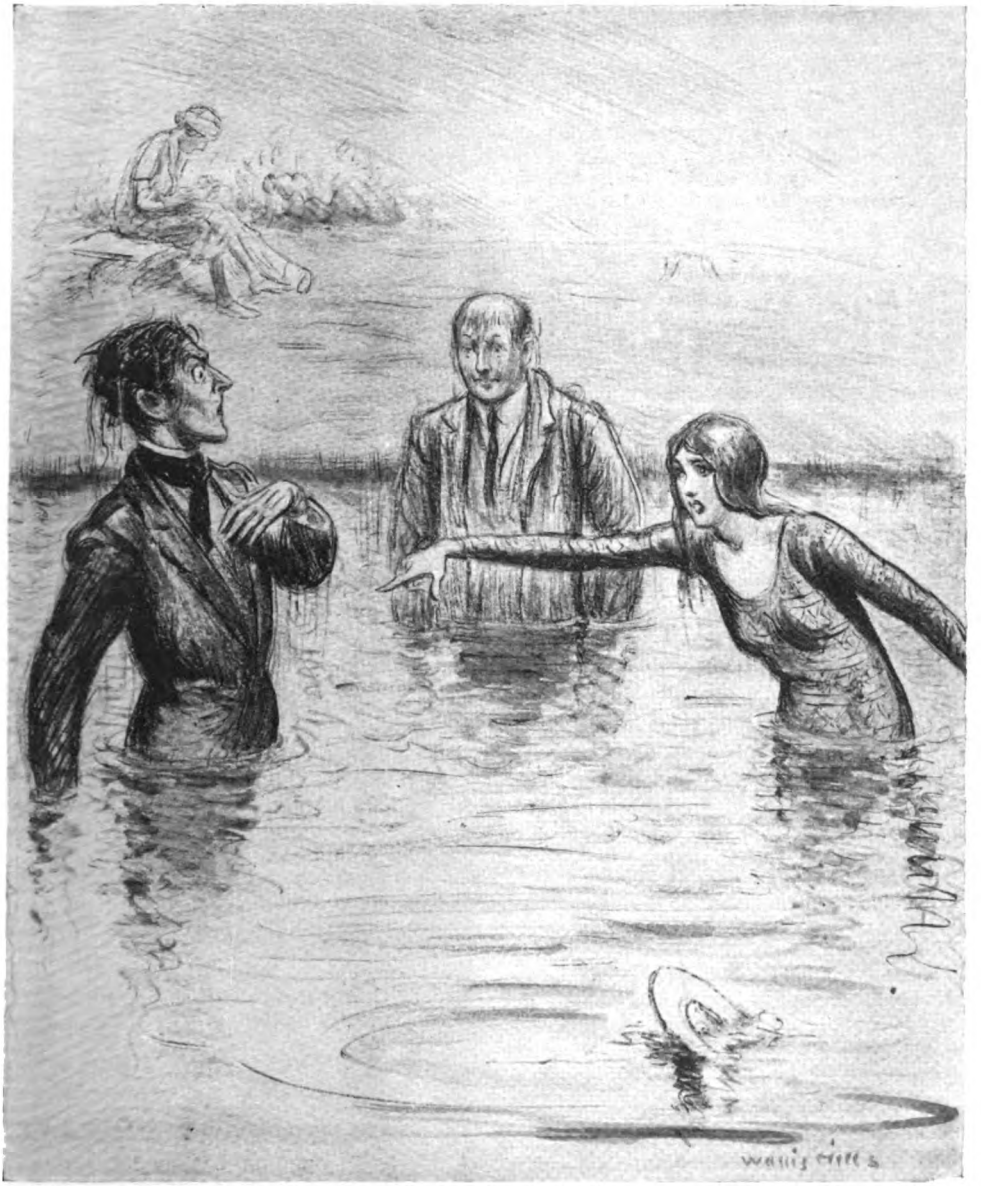
"I'll break off the engagement the moment I get home."

"You couldn't make a sounder move, old girl."

"William!"

"Jane!"

The woman on the bank, glancing up as she turned a page, saw a man and a girl embracing, up to their waists in water. It



"Rodney," said Jane, "my bag of clubs is at the bottom somewhere. Dive under and swim about and try to find it."

seemed to have nothing to do with her. She resumed her book.

Jane looked lovingly into William's eyes.

"William," she said, "I think I have loved you all my life."

"Jane," said William, "I'm dashed sure I've loved *you* all *my* life. Meant to tell you so a dozen times, but something always seemed to come up."

"William," said Jane, "you're an angel and a darling. Where's the ball?"

"There she pops."

"Playing eighty-four?"

"Eighty-four it is," said William. "Slow back, keep your eye on the ball, and don't press."

The woman on the bank began Chapter Twenty-five.

(*Another P. G. Wodehouse story next month.*)

THE MIDNIGHT AIR MAIL

by

HARRY HARPER

ILLUSTRATED BY E. VERPILLEUX

"THERE'S an enormous, frightfully ugly car outside, and a lot of most detestable-looking men!"

Peering through the bungalow window that Saturday morning, Freda Harmon cried out this news to her chum, Marion Winchester, who was busy in the tiny kitchen. The car which had just halted was, as a matter of fact, one of those huge machines of foreign extraction built for size and speed rather than beauty.

Altogether, one must admit, it was rather a strange spectacle; for as many as five men, all well-dressed in an ostentatious way, and with a look of almost disconcerting shrewdness about their clean-shaven faces, were now descending from this huge, ungainly vehicle—piled up higgledy-piggledy inside which, and strapped on to the back and sides, could be seen a queer medley of odds and ends: thin steel rods, sections of metal framework, and boxes and long narrow cases shrouded by tarpaulin covers.

But now Freda, the irrepressible, burst forth again.

"Oh! Good gracious! What a fat man!"

Marion, tall, graceful, supple, leisurely-moving—the embodiment of the outdoor girl who loses not one iota of her charm—opened the glass-panelled door that led into the porch; and, as she did so—coming up the path jauntily—she saw the object of Freda's excited comment.

Vast, though, rather than merely fat, was this man's ponderous form; and yet his dress was so dapper, and his manner, despite his burden of flesh, so alert, that you forgot, till you viewed him closely, how unwieldy his body was. A tremendous dynamic energy, overcoming all natural disadvantages, seemed to radiate from him: borne out by his purposeful movements; by his great, powerful face; by that mouth of his like a trap above his heavy, massive jaw. Catching sight of Marion, he whipped off his hat, his flinty blue eyes, cold, oddly expressionless, and sunk deep in his face, probing, gimlet-like, here and there.

"Your pardon," said he, in a suave, well-modulated voice, "but could you tell us if we are, as we think, on the fringe of Marsdale Moor?"

Marion, eyeing him coolly, and telling herself that rarely had she seen anyone whose smooth politeness was so suggestive of a cloak for the sinister, answered quietly:—

"Yes; the moor stretches away here to our right."

"Many thanks," said the huge man, slowly, still standing hat in hand, steely eyes glinting as he peered from Marion to the bungalow and the garden beyond; and she—receptive always to suggestions—seemed to feel intuitively that the question had been merely a blind, and that for some reason or other this man, repellent despite his blandness, had come up the path on a deliberately spying mission.

It was obvious, at any rate, that he was lingering—searching in his mind for some further question; for in a moment, with a mild courtesy belied by those pitiless eyes, he observed:—

"Coming upon you here, round the corner

by the wood, is something quite of a surprise. Surely—if I may say so—you are lonely. Why, there can hardly be another house for miles."

"No, there is not," said Marion, composedly, ignoring the first part of his remark, and with no invitation in her voice for any continuance of the conversation.

Replacing his hat without haste, and with those merciless eyes still questing from between puckered lids, the stranger persisted with a question which he strove—perhaps too obviously—to make entirely careless :—

"And, I suppose, here you would be quite some distance from the centre of the moor ?"

"Yes, a mile or so," said Marion, with a lift of the eyebrows which indicated her surprise at this peculiar catechism.

Whereat, deciding evidently that nothing more was to be gained from such an unflurried, terse-spoken young woman, and moving again with an alacrity astonishing for his bulk, the man retraced his steps, took his place beside the driver of the great car—the other men, also, having resumed their seats—and vanished with a clash of gears and in a cloud of dust.

MARION, retracing her steps to the bungalow door with an uneasiness of mind she could not have put into words, had little time, however, for introspection, because Freda burst forth with a torrent of words :—

"Horrible man ! He positively made me shiver, Marion. And I'm wretchedly uncomfortable now to think I shall be leaving you alone to-night. Why did those evil-looking fellows stop here ? Why did that fat creature ask such questions ? They are up to something, Marion. It's some sort of plot. And, whatever you say, I shall cancel going over to the Arkwrights' and stay here with you. It's simply not right that you should sleep here alone, even for one night."

"Don't be silly, Freda darling," answered Marion, putting her arm affectionately round her friend's waist. "I shall drive you over in the little car this afternoon, exactly as we agreed. And then I shall come and fetch you to-morrow morning. And to-night I shall sleep here without the slightest qualm. Even if those men are on some nefarious game, you may take it they're flying at something very much higher than this tiny bungalow. Besides, haven't I that automatic pistol my brother Geoffrey gave me ? And I assure you I shoot straight."

Still, though Marion had that fine, high-tempered courage which never fails, she would have confessed to a little wave of nameless fear that evening when—Freda having been motored, still protesting, to a country-house some ten miles distant—she locked her car in the garage behind the bungalow, and approached the rear entrance of that now silent, lonely, and dark-windowed little abode.

But the eerie feeling was momentary ; because Marion, thrusting it resolutely from her, busied herself with lamps and other cheerful devices, and sat down presently to a tempting little meal. After which, luxuriating before a fire with a book she had been wanting to read, she forgot completely not only the fact that she was alone, but also the existence of those doubtful-looking men and their gaunt, ugly car.

Reading on and on, in a silence nothing seemed to break, she saw presently with a start, when she glanced at the clock, that it was after eleven o'clock.

Rising with a yawn, and moving by habit to a side window, she drew aside the curtain and peered out across the dark moor.

Nothing met her eyes beyond the dim, near-by shapes of trees, and then the black, unfathomable expanse. With a little instinctive shiver she was dropping the curtain when—with a suddenness which made her doubt her eyes—a thin, clear, pencil-like ray of light, distant and yet astonishingly brilliant, shot skyward from somewhere towards the centre of the moor.

Again it stabbed upward, fine almost as a thread. Then there was blackness ; followed by further flashes with brief, regular intervals between them. Marion gazed in utter perplexity. Such a thing had never been seen on the moor before. It was inexplicable ; and yet it was obviously no accidental flashing, but an intentional signal of some kind—because, even as she looked, the beams appeared again.

A curiosity quite overmastering seized Marion now, banishing all thought of sleep. Out into the hall she hastened, without questioning the wisdom of what she was going to do. A warm fur-coat she wrapped round her, and into the pocket of it—with a little smile to herself at the melodramatic action—she slipped, loaded, the revolver her brother had given her. Then, in a moment, locking behind her the rear door of the bungalow, she was out across the garden and on the fringe of the moor.

Marion, who knew the moor by heart, and whose curiosity as to that light overcame all else, moved swiftly along a path which took her towards it. When she was half-way between the bungalow and the spot from which the light emanated, Marion came to a sudden halt, listening intently. Familiar with aerodromes—for her brother Geoffrey was chief pilot of a

Continental "airway"—she had hardly a moment's doubt as she turned to face the wind. Far-distant, yet unmistakable, she heard the drone of a high-powered 'plane. And even as she listened, coming lower and nearer, the song of the aero-engine filled the sky. She peered among the clouds, but for a spell could see nothing. Then, quite abruptly—a beautiful, elusive sight—a tiny dark shape, lights gleaming at its wing-tips, shot down from a cloud-bank, and, its pilot switching off his motor, glided silently earthward towards the spot from which the ground signal was still flashing.

But what did it mean? Marion was completely at a loss as she hurried on. No airmen ever landed on the moor, particularly at night; and what did that light imply? Yet, even as she speculated, the black shape of the alighting 'plane, the wind whistling in its wires, sped above her head and was lost sight of, as it neared earth, by a dipping of the moor.

After that, for a moment or so, there was silence; then—mystery piling on mystery—there came suddenly on the wind the sound of a distant, quickly-smothered cry; a man's startled, angry cry; uttered, Marion told herself, partly in sheer amazement, and partly with a view to summoning aid. Whereupon, more perturbed than ever, she broke into a run; and even as she did so that light-signal on the moor went out abruptly and all was dark.

"WHAT on earth can be going on?" Marion asked herself, pausing for an instant to draw breath. Then, topping a little rise, she found herself looking over towards a road which wound across the moor; and on that road, moving fast, were the twin lights of some big motor-car; while, borne fitfully on a wind-gust, came the sound of a hard-driven engine as the car, turning to the right, disappeared from view.

Breaking into a run again as she went down the slope, Marion was brought sharply to a halt by the sight of a dim shape within a stone's throw of the path. It was the aeroplane, now standing dark, gaunt, and apparently deserted. She stepped across from the path to the big machine. Drawing from her pocket an electric torch, she switched on a beam of light, only to draw back instinctively as she saw a dark figure lying on the turf. The next moment, mastering her reluctance, she had hastened forward, and saw that it was a young man in flying garb, who had been bound and gagged till he lay helpless.

And as her light travelled upward to his face she had another shock of sheer surprise. For she knew this pilot. She had met him, and had actually flown with him, the last time she had been at a London air-station with her brother Geoffrey. It was Captain Carlton—Captain Robert Carlton—one of our air-mail pilots on the routes between England and cities on the Continent.

It was the work of an instant to whip the gag from his mouth.

"What has happened? Tell me quickly," said Marion, as he raised himself, dazed and blinking at her light.

For a second or so only was he nonplussed. Then his clean-shaven, fine-drawn, resolute face—every feature telling of a keen, trained intelligence—showed that he was master of himself as he said, collectedly and with eager pleasure:—

"That voice, if I may say so, I should know again anywhere. It's Miss Winchester! Miss Marion Winchester! Though what on earth——"

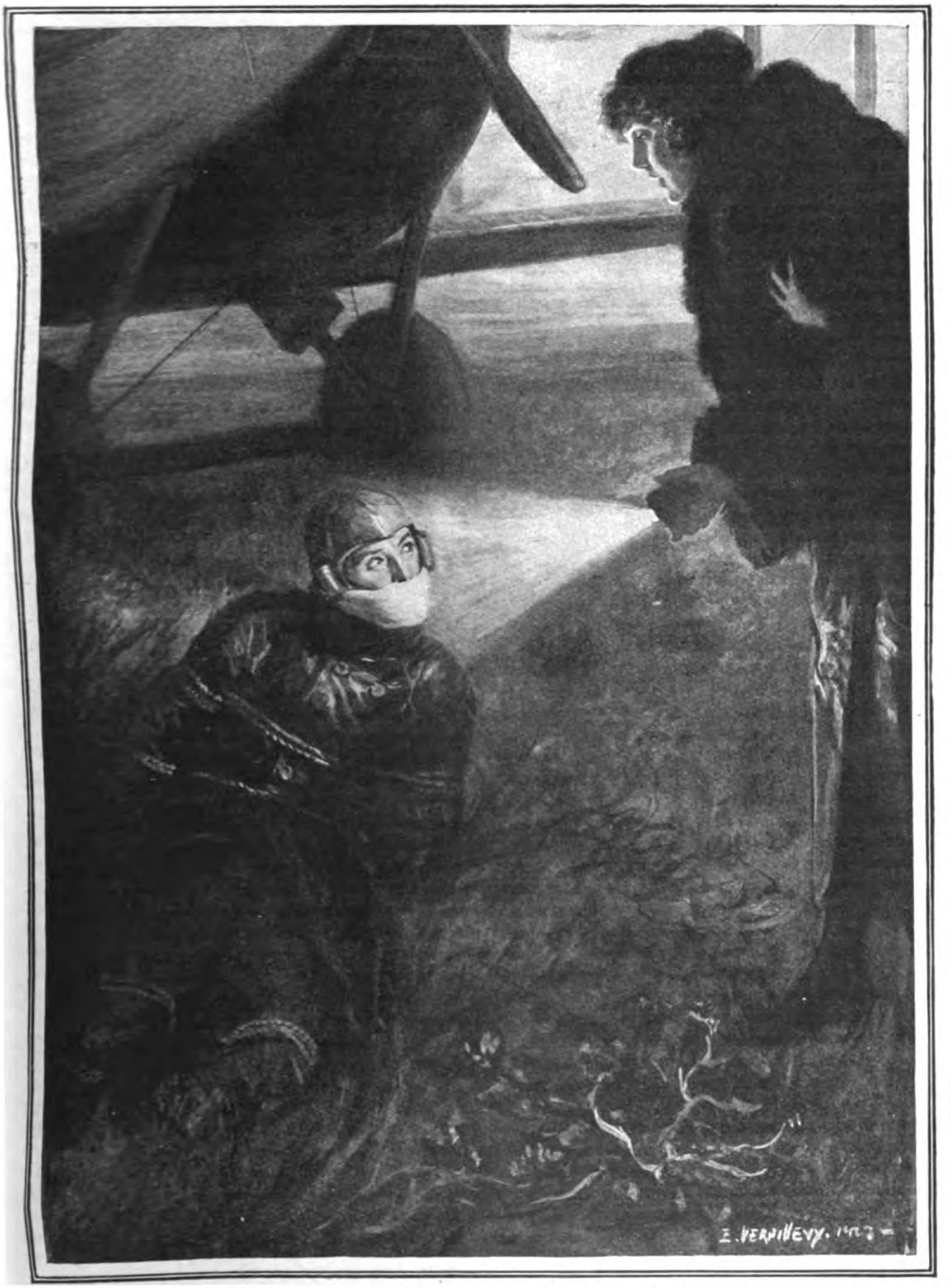
Marion, glad for the moment of the darkness, felt a flush steal to her cheeks, because she and Carlton had, without a doubt, taken to each other tremendously during that long afternoon on the 'drome; and after flying with him twice, and talking with him all the time during tea, she had earned joking chaff afterwards from her brother Geoffrey. About Carlton, steel-nerved and utterly fearless, and yet with a whimsical, quaintly-humorous view of life, there had been something extraordinarily appealing; and even now Marion found her voice quivering oddly as she answered:—

"Yes, you're right. I'm Marion Winchester. But——"

"I'll tell you in one word," said Carlton, tersely, struggling from the bonds round his arms and freeing his ankles. "I've been held up; robbed. And by an infernally clever trick. This light here was a blind—an intentional blind. It was masquerading as the flashing signal on an intermediate landing-ground at Rangeford, miles farther on. I was scheduled to stop there to-night to pick up mails; and when I reduced altitude, after having been obliged to fly for a long time above clouds, and caught sight of this light, I naturally took it—not being sure, just for the moment, exactly where I was—for our Rangeford signal, and came planing down. Hardly had my wheels touched ground—there being imitation landing-lights, I should mention, as well as the identifying signal—when these beggars appeared. I jumped down, taking them for mechanics, and they had me trussed up before I could move a hand."

"But I don't quite see——" Marion was beginning.

"It's simple, really, Miss Winchester. Though I didn't know it till I heard them



Drawing from her pocket an electric torch, she saw a dark figure on the turf, bound and gagged.

rifling my mail-compartment, I had on board to-night a registered packet of diamonds of the first water—worth almost anything you like to name—being sent over urgently to the Continent. These scoundrels must have got wind of it, even to the extent of delaying somehow my mechanic, Perkins, so that he could not join me on the machine to-night; and then they've worked this brand-new scheme of putting up false airway lights, with the result—confound them—that I'm the victim."

Whereupon, quickly, Marion told him of the fat, suave man and the car laden with gear of various kinds. Carlton nodded comprehendingly. Then, rubbing his limbs to restore their circulation, he spoke in eager haste.

"We've a chance yet, Miss Winchester. These beggars will drive like blazes towards Midhaven—the seaport, you know, where there's an early-morning boat to the Continent. But now you've released me, and upset their plans in this respect, we'll fly after 'em and—but, dash it all, I've just remembered! The brutes took away the revolver I carry strapped inside the cockpit."

Marion, without a word, groped in her pocket and produced, with a spare clip of cartridges, her big loaded revolver.

Carlton, as he saw it gleaming in the torch-light, uttered a joyful cry.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "What luck! I feel like a new man. And now we haven't a second to lose. I'm reckoning that, as you've played so wonderfully the part of rescuing angel, you'll come along with me."

"I should just say I would," answered Marion, her eyes sparkling; and almost the next instant, it seemed, she found herself beside Carlton in the big, roomy cockpit of the mail-'plane. And never, though she had flown often enough before, and was not unfamiliar with night-flying, had Marion gained such a tremendous sense of sheer speed as when that great machine leapt from the moor and, whirling away low towards the faint ribbon of roadway, sent dark earth shadows flitting below it as though they were being jerked away backward by some giant hand.

Up and out, wheeling in a great, swift, breath-taking curve! On and on—devouring distance at more than twice the speed of the fastest train; the night-wind shrieking past the cockpit; the huge engine settling to a dominant, rhythmical roar.

And then, rising above the clamour, Carlton's voice, grimly satisfied:—

"Look ahead now, Miss Winchester!"

Marion looked, and there, away upon the long moor road, ahead and below, she saw a couple of little shafts of light, close beside each other, which shifted a trifle from side to side, queerly, as the car to which they were fixed followed the windings of the road.

"We've got 'em!" said Carlton, and dipped till the great rushing 'plane—a dark, terrible, avenging shape—was close down above the glimmering surface of the road.

AND now, so far as Marion was concerned, things happened so quickly she could hardly grasp them. The car below loomed up almost beneath them, a dark shape suggesting to her some great beetle as it scurried upon the winding road. Then, suddenly, from it, rising faintly above the general din, came a "tap-tap-tapping" noise, like the beating of a stick upon a fence; and at the same moment little rearward flashes of flame shot from the back of the car.

"Quick, Miss Winchester!" called Carlton. "Take shelter in the mail-compartment. The beggars are shooting at us!"

Marion, moving back obediently and drawing open the small sliding door, had a glimpse of Carlton, one arm stretched out from the cockpit, aiming her revolver deliberately and carefully at the speeding shape below. And then, it seemed at her very ear, there came a "crack, crack, crack" as he fired again and again.

The next thing she saw, ghost-like, from a little window in the mail-chamber—reminding her of the melodrama of a film—was a fearful lurch of the tearing car below. Like some stricken thing it swerved, first to one side and then to the other. Then, with a crash which sent a sort of echo to them above, it ran off the road and overturned.

An instant later, even while this crash echoed in her ears, Marion felt as though her entire world was turning turtle. Suddenly the floor of the mail-compartment tilted, and went on tilting, over and still farther over. She had a demoralizing glimpse of the earth, sliding away in an extraordinary manner sideways. And then she realized that Carlton was banking very steeply and swiftly to turn and land. Haste was, in fact, in his every movement now; and yet it was a skilled, ordered haste. The great machine came round—straightened out; its engine sank abruptly to silence; and the next thing Marion felt was an up-and-down movement of the floor beneath her feet as the 'plane took ground on its well-sprung wheels upon an unobstructed, roadside strip of moor.

Everything was dark, confusing. Carlton she saw, as she opened the sliding door, was on his feet almost at a bound as the machine came to a standstill. He turned towards her, scrambling already from the cockpit. His rapid, eager words, clipped by the night wind, came to her in snatches.

"Winged their driver—car went simply west. Am going to pay them back in their own coin—hold 'em up, with your revolver—those who're not knocked out—and get back those diamonds before they can pull themselves together. Will you stay here, please—quite all right—keep eye on machine?"

Almost before Marion could nod her assent, Carlton vanished, suddenly and utterly; and she found herself alone.

Minutes, it seemed, went by. Then, chilled by the wind, even in her warm coat, she moved back into the shelter of the mail-compartment doorway.

Groping with her hand within, she came upon a wall-switch which, when she turned it, almost without thinking, flooded the interior of the mail-compartment with light from a bulb in the roof. She perceived now that what she stood in was a little vestibule. Inside, separated from the vestibule by a partition and another sliding door—which stood three-parts open—was the mail-chamber proper, laden with its bags piled one upon another.

Marion stepped within, glancing idly round; but even as she did so she heard a faint sound, from towards the front of the machine, which made her stand rigid, holding her breath. Furtive it was and disquieting, and instead of hastening out, as she would have done had she believed it to be Carlton returning, she stood a little sideways, screened by the door, and looked across the bow of the machine along the light-ray from the cabin.

As she did so she saw a sight which seemed to make her heart stand still.

Over the side of the cockpit, ghost-like in the shaft of light, appeared a bloodstained face, followed by a big, groping arm. That face, bleeding from a gash across the forehead, she recognized in a flash with an inward quake of fear. It was the face of the flinty-eyed fat man who had accosted her that morning at the bungalow. And if he had seemed sinister then, now he appeared simply diabolical. Breathing heavily, his great face deadly pale, his mouth drawn in an evil, rigid line, he drew his vast bulk ponderously, yet rapidly—like some great reptile—over the side of the cockpit and into the machine.

Marion felt caught, trapped, helpless. A sickening sensation of sheer fear overcame her. Where was Carlton? What did this mean? But even as such questions surged to her brain, another, and a more immediate, peril caused her to crouch, hardly daring to draw her breath, behind the protecting pile of mail-bags. For the fat man, his chest heaving from his exertions, had now rolled, rather than walked, a pace or two from the bow of the machine, and thrust his huge face, eyes screwed up menacingly, into the illuminated mail-compartment.

But it was no more than a hasty, perfunctory glance inside that he gave. He had practically taken it for granted, it was clear, that the machine was empty. Also he was consumed, obviously, by a terrible haste. For, swinging round clumsily in the narrow doorway, he fumbled and groped his way into the pilot's seat. Whereupon, striking another swift chill to Marion's heart, as she ventured a glance round the corner of the mail-bags, there came the sudden, ear-splitting roar of the engine of the aeroplane, and it moved forward with a movement that made her cling to the partition just beside her. The fat man, obviously, knew quite well how to handle an aeroplane; and somehow or other, having eluded Carlton in the darkness, it was clear that he was bent now upon making off somewhere by air, having abandoned his fellow-criminals, and probably with the stolen diamonds in one of his capacious pockets.

And Marion's position, a prisoner there in the mail-compartment!

She trembled as she crouched, feeling the big machine lift beneath her and climb steadily into the sky.

What could she possibly do? It was true that she herself, thanks to her brother's teaching—she had gained her certificate at a flying school the previous summer—knew quite enough about the handling of aeroplanes to take charge even of such a big machine for a spell, and bring it in a glide earthward. But what could she do now? To creep forward, weaponless, in an endeavour to overcome that vast scoundrel—bent over the controls with his back towards her—was clearly out of the question.

MEANWHILE, rising smoothly, the mail-'plane drove into the night. Emboldened by the fact that the bulky scoundrel at the controls seemed engrossed utterly in his task, and oblivious now to all else, Marion raised herself behind the mail-bags to a more comfortable position, and ventured a deliberate glance forward through the vestibule door. The fat man, sprawled awkwardly over the controls, yet obviously master of the situation, was groping with a free hand in the locker beside the dashboard where the air-maps and charts were kept.

It was while she was gazing thus, fascinated—her mind awhirl at the terrors of her predicament—that Marion became aware of a faint, persistent rapping, coming apparently from some small rear chamber set back towards the tail of the machine, and immediately behind the big mail-compartment

She had a glimpse of Carlton, one arm stretched out from the

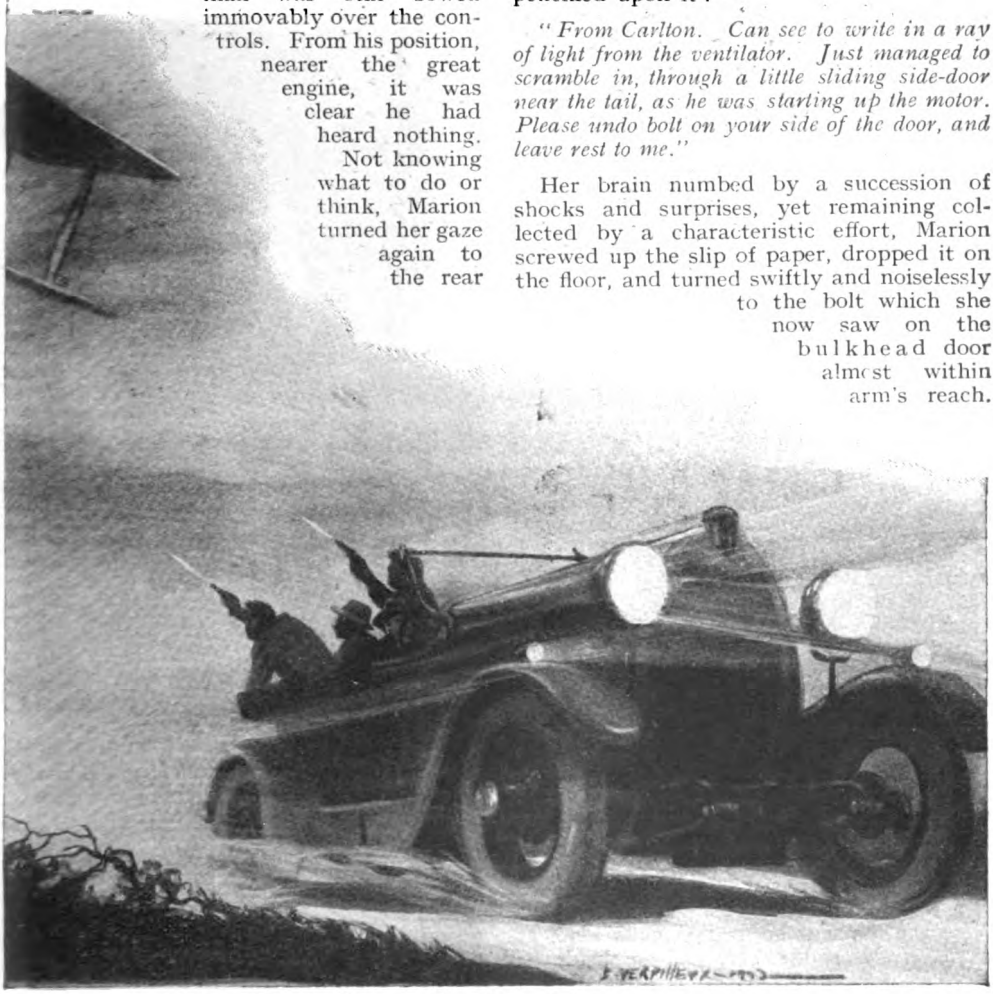
proper. For a moment or so, listening with only half her mind, she took it for some sound incidental to the rush of the 'plane through the air. But soon its very insistence—three raps followed by another three, and then by others in subdued, urgent succession—forced itself on her attention.

Marion, perturbed and perplexed still further by this development, looked back doubtfully at what seemed like a tiny, narrow door, set in the bulkhead which divided the mail-compartment from the hidden rear-space from which the tappings came. Again she heard them—demandingly, appealingly. She glanced anxiously forward. No; the huge back of the fat man was still bowed immovably over the controls. From his position, nearer the great engine, it was clear he had heard nothing. Not knowing what to do or think, Marion turned her gaze again to the rear bulkhead; and as she did so she was amazed to see two fingers and a thumb—holding, precariously, a folded-up slip of paper—appear through the slats of a small ventilator set in the bulkhead near the tiny door. This paper the fingers—which Marion told herself must belong to someone crouching in the rear-space behind the bulkhead—twisted to and fro with the evident intention of catching the eye of whoever was inside the mail-compartment.

Hardly knowing what she did, Marion moved a step back and, reaching out cautiously, took the screwed-up paper from the mysterious fingers. Instantly she did so, they were withdrawn. Sinking down again behind the shelter of the mail-bags, she unfolded the sheet of paper—a page torn from a notebook—and read with difficulty and astonishment these words pencilled upon it:—

"From Carlton. Can see to write in a ray of light from the ventilator. Just managed to scramble in, through a little sliding side-door near the tail, as he was starting up the motor. Please undo bolt on your side of the door, and leave rest to me."

Her brain numbed by a succession of shocks and surprises, yet remaining collected by a characteristic effort, Marion screwed up the slip of paper, dropped it on the floor, and turned swiftly and noiselessly to the bolt which she now saw on the bulkhead door almost within arm's reach.



cockpit, aiming her revolver at the speeding shape below.

A silent prayer she gave that it might not be too stiff to yield to her fingers ; but here she found she need have no concern. It slid back smoothly as she seized it. Just before she finished her task she ventured a quick, tapping signal on the side of the framework. It was answered instantly. Then, a moment later, free of its bolt, the door was opened cautiously, and almost before she realized it Carlton had slipped through the narrow aperture and, moving softly, had closed the door behind him.

One swift, reassuring glance at her he gave ; then, motioning her to hide again behind the mail-bags, made a gesture enjoining utter silence. Marion, sinking down at once obediently, saw that Carlton's eyes were riveted on the ponderous back of the fat man forward. Then his hand fumbled a moment in his side-pocket, and came forth with the grim-looking revolver that she knew so well, seeing that it was her own.

On tip-toe Carlton took a step forward, and then another. It seemed to Marion that he made no sound ; and yet something — perhaps a sort of after - impression on his brain of the slight shock along the framework of the hull when Carlton had closed the bulkhead door—caused the man at the controls to straighten his great shoulders, and then, as though he sensed the sudden peril behind him, to swing half-round in the pilot's seat, and turn his heavy-jowled, evil face towards the mail-chamber door.

At the moment he turned thus his feet were on the rudder-bar, and he held the elevator and aileron lever in one hand, the other hand having just been exploring again in the big locker below the instrument-board. That free hand hung rigid, just for an instant, as his deep-set eyes caught a first glimpse of Carlton's tall figure, outlined menacingly in the mail-compartment doorway. Then the hand, moving now with lightning speed, slid to his pocket, and emerged, quicker almost than the eye could follow it, with the barrel of the pistol it held swinging already in Carlton's direction.

It seemed to Marion, gazing wide-eyed from within, that the Yet they must have

But, deadly swift though he was, Carlton was as quick, if not quicker. His arm flashed up in one unswerving movement, and even before it had risen fully his revolver spoke. It seemed, in fact, to Marion, gazing wide-eyed from within, that of the two reports which cracked forth the next instant, that from Carlton's weapon came perceptibly the first. Yet, in reality, they must have been almost simultaneous.

And then it appeared to Marion—strange, tense illusion of the brain—that just for

a spell those two figures, rigid with weapons outstretched, were as if graven to stone. Yet the illusion was shattered almost before it came, because the huge figure of the fat man, bulking black against the sky across the bow, jerked upright, convulsively, as though pulled and tautened by some unseen wire. His pistol clattered to the floor of the machine near his feet. From his lips issued an unintelligible sound—

report from Carlton's weapon came perceptibly the first. been almost simultaneous.

deep, guttural, half-word and half-cry. Then, with a sickening swerve of his great body, he reeled against the side of the cockpit, bent backwards for one horrible moment, and then toppled sheer outwards and disappeared into the night. One instant he was there. The next—like some terribly efficient conjuring trick—he had vanished utterly, with a trailing, strangled cry.

Dazed, horror-struck—retaining her faculties only by a supreme effort—the next thing Marion became conscious of was a sudden wild movement of the mail-'plane as it rushed forward uncontrolled. Gripping at the side-frame near her, the floor of the cabin seeming now to rise almost vertical, she saw Carlton, himself clutching at the door, striving as quickly as he could to get to the pilot's seat. But —her eyes told her even as she looked— there was something wrong with him. His forward movement ceased. His hands, suddenly nerveless, lost their grip of the framework of the door; and, to Marion's redoubled terror, he slid limply to the floor just inside the doorway, a streak of blood showing across the pallor of his face.

And now the great machine, like a mad thing, reared and plunged. Marion, feeling as though her whole world had gone to chaos, found suddenly in this predicament a spur which tensed her nerves and muscles to an instinctive, compelling action. She knew enough to realize, almost without having to tell herself, that the big 'plane, after a lurching upward movement—engine roaring and controls untended—might begin some fearful pell-mell dive, ending, unless checked, in a crushing impact with the earth.

It was this dominating thought, overriding all else, which, in those next fearful moments, kept her from sheer collapse. Climbing, scrambling forward, and permitting herself no more than one quick, pitying glance at Carlton's prone form as she passed him, she struggled, panting, into the cockpit, and an instant later found herself actually in the pilot's seat. It was now or never! Steeling her nerves, summoning to her aid all the

knowledge she had, Marion did almost automatically, and yet with delicate, swift precision, exactly what she ought to have done with throttle-lever and controls. Dexterously she steadied the big machine till it was moving more normally through the air; after which, accelerating the motor again, she had the mail-'plane responsive instantly to its controls, and flying horizontally.

Barely had this been accomplished when a new problem assailed her. She must land —summon help! But where? Without the faintest notion where the great machine was, she glanced over, sideways, behind the shelter of the wind-screen, and saw, a thousand feet or so below, a line of sea-foam breaking upon a shore. Cautiously she brought the mail-'plane lower; and now in the moonlight, to her intense relief, she saw a long, clear strip of sand. So, bringing the 'plane round on a careful turn, she headed in level with the easily-seen line of foam which marked the meeting of sand and sea. Then, switching off and on, she crept cautiously lower, heading midway along a broad, clear ribbon of sand. The sky was now almost cloud-free, the wind had dropped, and the moonlight was brilliant. Furthermore the big mail-'plane, though its top-speed was high, had been designed for night use, and had a remarkably slow landing speed, with a quick pull-up after alighting. She made quite a respectably-smooth contact with the sand; and to her joy, once the machine was down, its wheels ran unchecked on a firm, hard surface, and it came speedily to a perfectly safe standstill.

But her relief was clouded instantly by anxiety as to Carlton s condition.

Darting back from the cockpit she saw with astonished delight that he was sitting up, a handkerchief held to his head, and a look of inquiry in his eyes.

"We've just landed. Who did it?" he questioned.

"I did," answered Marion, simply, and his look of admiring wonder sent a thrill to her heart.

The next instant she ran to him as he struggled to rise to his feet.

"Keep still," she cried. "Your head?"

"It's nothing," he declared, stoutly. "That beggar's bullet, scoring along my forehead, gave me only a temporary 'knock-out.'"

"But it must be dressed," said she, hastening for the first-aid outfit.

He submitted so willingly to her deft ministrations that she could not help saying:—

"You're a wonderful patient, really. Why, you seem actually to be enjoying it!"

"I am," he murmured, fervently, and, as he caught her eye, there was a look in his that sent the blood rushing to her cheeks. So electric, in fact, did she feel the atmosphere between them that, hastening to finish her work, she said, quickly:—

"And what about a cigarette?"

"Yes, if you'll give me one," said he.

She gave him one from her own case, and lit it for him; but as she was withdrawing her hand, he seized it tenderly but firmly.

"It's no good, Marion," said he, using her name with a whimsical, appealing boldness. "I've got to say it. Yes—here and now. May I speak to you"—he smiled boyishly—"just as one pilot to another?"

She could not help smiling, too, as she nodded her head, though she sought—unavailingly—to withdraw her hand.

"Well, it's this, then," he went on, with a quick flow of words. "You've just done an amazingly fine bit of piloting for me. And now may I—in all the real business of living, you know—do your piloting for *you?* I'm rushing things, I'm afraid, like I always do, and I'm a sight better at the controls of a machine than I am at this word-spinning game. But it's life or death to me, Marion; my heart's in it. You won't turn me down, will you? Why——"

"But," interrupted Marion, with a mock severity, though she no longer strove to free her hand, "we hardly even know each other."

"Not know each other!" cried Carlton, reproachfully. "Why, what we've been through together to-night is equal to a life-time of ordinary humdrum events. And if I could only find the words I'm groping for in my poor, bemused old brain, I'd——"

"What I gather you're trying to do," interposed Marion, demurely, "is to ask me to marry you."

"By Jove, that's it!" cried he.

"That being so," said Marion, "and being as I am one of those quite modern young women who make up their minds quickly, all I can say, Robert, is—'yes'!"

And the next instant Carlton—looking as though Paradise lay unfolded before his eyes—had slipped his arm round her yielding waist.

JUST a note needs adding, telling of how grim justice was done, if ever it was.

That fat man, evil of repute as well as of face—he was the moving spirit of an international gang of the worst criminals—fell far to his death, wounded by Carlton's shot, till he crashed through a belt of trees. And there on the grass, at the foot of a tree, was his body found—the diamonds he had risked and lost his life to steal broken from their package, lying scattered, gleaming, upon the turf around him.

AS I KNOW THEM

Some Famous Authors of To-day

W. B. MAXWELL
STACY AUMONIER
ARNOLD BENNETT

By Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott

W. B. MAXWELL.

FOR a long time I was dimly conscious of a likeness between W. B. Maxwell and H. de Vere Stacpoole. Both were charming and handsome men, but it was not that. Both took themselves lightly and their work seriously, but—so do all artists! Both again were outdoor men, might be and probably were country squires somewhere or other, folk who rode to hounds, and shot and fished. I only knew them in London, where I must say they seemed a little out of place. Tame prancings in a town park did not somehow appear right for them, for they had in their blue eyes the love of adventure. One day, however, when talking to Mr. Maxwell, I discovered the reason of that faint underlying similarity. On the father's side Mr. Maxwell's people hailed from Limerick, Mr. Stacpoole's from yet further west; in fact, both were Irish. I don't mean that they were real Irish, but their ancestors had spent a few hundred years in the ever-verdant country; and in some subtle way its traditions, its atmosphere, had affected them. A something had slipped into their blood which had made both a little different from the average man.

When I was a girl I spent several summers in the New Forest. As soon as I could induce infantile scrogglywogs to take the form of letters, I had joyfully begun to waste my time setting down tales and verses, and I remember the thrill that shook me when, on driving past a house which even at this distance of time I can recall, I was told it belonged to Miss Braddon (Mrs. Maxwell). I was not old enough to read novels, but I had seen her yellow-backed books in shop-windows and heard the Grown-Ups talk of them. I looked longingly at that house. Within its walls lived a Real Writer, to me a godlike creature of unknown species. Looking from one of the windows sat a child, and they told me she had five. How I envied those children! If they should want to write—and I heard afterwards that most of them did—they would have their mother's sympathy and experience and advice.

I envied them so much that I tried to get into touch with the fortunate creatures. In those days, however, except my cousin (H. D. Lowry), my people did not know any writers, and therefore I was unsuccessful. Though I never had the good fortune to meet Miss Braddon, I often passed another of her homes in my journeys west. St. Kew Highway is a green station at which no one ever seems to get in or out, but it interests me because Braddons have been seated there since the days of Elizabeth. They must have been stout thrusting fellows, for they represented the county in her Parliaments; and it was a far cry in those days from Cornwall to Westminster.

To St. Kew his mother took W. B. Maxwell when he was a child, and his early memories are of the sea-smelling West and that old forest which Norman William enlarged and then called New. I wonder whether he owns the house that I recall; whether it is in that place of memories that he would be?

Having such parents it was only to be expected that W. B. Maxwell would receive

the education which would be the best possible for a boy of original mind. All you who are anxious to do your best for your lively youngsters hear what it was. Until he was fourteen the child was sent to an ordinary school; after that he was allowed to please himself as to what further teaching he had. Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell were anxious not to stultify the child by over-education (so-called), and when he came to them and said that he felt the time had come for him to specialize on lines that might be useful to him in after life, they were willing to let him do as he wished. He went to a school of art, and to the training of eye and hand he received during the next few years he considers he owes his habit of accurate observation. It is probable this was innate, as were also his sense of proportion, of line, of form, light, and shade; but he had chosen to undergo a discipline which would enhance these gifts. I observe, too, that it is one the writer often chooses. Arnold Bennett, Clemence Dane, Stacy Aumonier, and others have studied pictorial art, have even been painters for a time. They have done this until the time was ripe for them to take up writing.

It was some years before W. B. Maxwell realized that he was going to become a novelist. He did not perceive that he was unconsciously preparing himself for the work he was to do; he is, in fact, a man who knows little about himself. Yes, in some ways—ways that make the really knowing folk smile with an affectionate, "Ah, now, the decent fellow——"

A writer is generally unaware of his knowledge. If he does not know a few unimportant surface things he thinks of himself as ignorant—which, of course, adds to his charm! Psychology, that deep knowledge, is unconscious. The writer does not sit down and think, "How would my characters act in this or that situation?" There is no need for him to do so, because he knows. That knowledge lies just below the surface of his conscious mind, lies there in readiness; and any moment he can turn on the waters of the fountain, let the diamond spray leap into the air.

Apparently there are two types of creative writers: those like Wells, Galsworthy, and Zangwill, who work at top speed, with an explosion of tremendous vitality, and those who indulge in a good deal of what seems like vague dreaming before they begin a book and also while writing it. Mr. Maxwell is one of the latter, and he is inclined—like the child who doesn't do his homework—to regard disorderly dreaming as reprehensible. Let him remember the story of two lads who while at school ornamented the top and bottom of their class. The top boy was always pointed out to visitors as one who would do well in life, and nothing was said about the poor dullard at the other end. Well, and the top boy did do well—he became provost of his native town! The other was Sir Walter Scott.

Arnold Bennett says that creative work "comes to perfection in a vast expanse of custom, leisure, and apparently vacuous reverie." Wise Mr. Bennett!

It was because a certain publisher said that if the young Maxwell would let him have a story by a certain date he would bring it out that his first book was written. Being a mother, I know what Miss Braddon must have felt when her son brought to her chapter after chapter of that story. She would have been wondering what lay behind the long dreams of her boy, and then he came with the molten metal, and shaped it under her eyes. She herself belonged to the more volcanic school of writers. "Ah," says her son, "I am nothing beside her. It was she was the instinctive writer." I, who have read and loved the novels of both, realize that she appealed to her generation and that he does to this. If his son, now at Harrow, carries on the tradition, I expect he will write quite differently from his seniors in the family, that he will produce stories that suit the taste of our children, *i.e.*, the men and women of his own generation.

AS I said before, Mr. Maxwell takes art seriously. He speaks lightly of many things, but when it comes to literature the smile dies out of his eyes. "Perhaps my view of fiction may sound contradictory," he says. "The events which make up a plot only interest me as showing the states and phases of mind which result from them, and those I try to do objectively. I notice that Tolstoi, in the middle of an important scene, will suddenly tell the reader what the footman is thinking of the matter. I wonder how he knows? We observe what people do. We rarely know what is going on in their minds."

I observed that Turgenev did not often break the main thread after that fashion, and he agreed. "Maupassant never does it. The French—oh, when it comes to objective writing the French set us a wonderful example."

I suspect the reason the ordinary writer tells us what the footman or some other person thinks is because he wants to set down his own views. For the moment he becomes that footman.

With Mr. Maxwell's faith in life and the widening possibilities that lie before us, it is only natural he should like to end on a rising note. He seems to say that, although

Photo.] W. B. MAXWELL. *[C. Smith Gardner.*

Death may claim the physical self, he cannot touch the man himself. His curiously pitiful regard for the individual is evidenced by his last story. There is no human creature so dull, so commonplace, he says in "The Day's Journey," but that if we understood his tendernesses, his anxieties, his wistful hopes, we should not find him interesting. He has drawn for us, therefore, two old codgers, showing us the inwardness of their simple lives, their qualities of faith and affection, their dependence on each other. You begin the book convinced of the dullness of these two men, you close it with a smile of more than tolerance. They are such good chaps, and though they may bore everyone they meet, they will never bore those who read of them. Mr. Maxwell has used a medium which suits the subject, a sort of colloquial English, and that he is able to do this proves the quality of his craftsmanship. Compare "The Day's Journey" with "Spinster of This Parish"—a delicately romantic tale of a hidden love-affair which after many years of happiness ends in marriage. The English he uses for each fits the tale.

Mr. Maxwell does well when he chooses a subject which enables him to make use of his peculiar quality. He looks at the world with a kindliness so great, so warm, that it is almost more than objective. A man who has been loved from his first days, with a love that has gone with him unfailingly through the years until he has come to middle age, is of different fibre to less fortunate folk. Everyday life has its disappointments and worries, and the flame on the altar is for most of us intermittent. For him it has burnt with a steady light.

Hence that depth of tenderness which makes wonderful his books.

STACY AUMONIER.

TO learn of the stock from which a person comes is the beginning of knowledge. Just as acorns produce oaks and not beeches, so a man's ancestry produces that particular type and no other. Stacy Aumonier has come from sturdy and adventurous stock, he is born to manifest the qualities which enabled his Huguenot ancestors to start a new life among strangers in a strange land, when the bigotry of their own folks would have slaughtered them. They were silversmiths and settled at Spitalfields and, ever since, the men of the family have worked with their hands at some decorative craft. Artist-craftsmen for hundreds of years, it is an ancestry of which a man might well be proud.

Stacy's father introduced a variation, for he made a business of his art, founded a firm, and did so in the right and proper way—an example to all the lazy folks who say you can do nothing without influence and capital. That Aumonier was a carver of architectural ornament, and, having no money, no premises, no office, he took possession of a corner of the back kitchen. Picture Mrs. Aumonier's despair over the litter he made! She had already one or two babies (Stacy has four elder brothers), and, what with the children and the stone and the tools and her man always at work in the house, she must have been put to the pin of her collar, not only to keep the place tidy, but to get any comfort for the increasing family. She must, in fact, have been a wonderful manager and a sweet-tempered woman. As time passed and the business grew, journeymen were needed, first one, then another, and the little back kitchen housed them all. Eventually, of course, enough capital was collected for the wild adventure of—Works!

It was and remains a prosperous business. In those early days it brought in enough for the youngest son to be sent to a public school, and Stacy had an education which taught him to play cricket. It seems the boy had no use for the old lumber of the classics. His little mother, before her marriage, had been an artist—in clothes—and the youngest had inherited her love of colour. His father, from whom had come his sense of line, wanted him to be draughtsman for the firm, and Stacy was—for a time. But stone did not satisfy him. The boy was not certain what he wanted, except that it must be connected with life rather than buildings. He embarked, therefore, on a series of adventures.

HIS first job was in a big furniture shop, where he was quickly recognized as a fine colourist—their best; and his discovery of that gift led him to take up painting. As far as he could see, however, there was no money to be made out of pictures, not even a bare living, and he saw no reason to go threadbare because the nation his ancestors had adopted preferred oleographs to Rembrandts. While covering his unsaleable canvases, he had discovered that he could amuse people by giving sketches of well-known folks. If his friends, why not the world? As far as money went, this was a more successful adventure, for London received Stacy with joy, and he was soon in request at big parties. He wrote his own sketches, and before long was doing curtain-raisers for the Criterion Theatre.

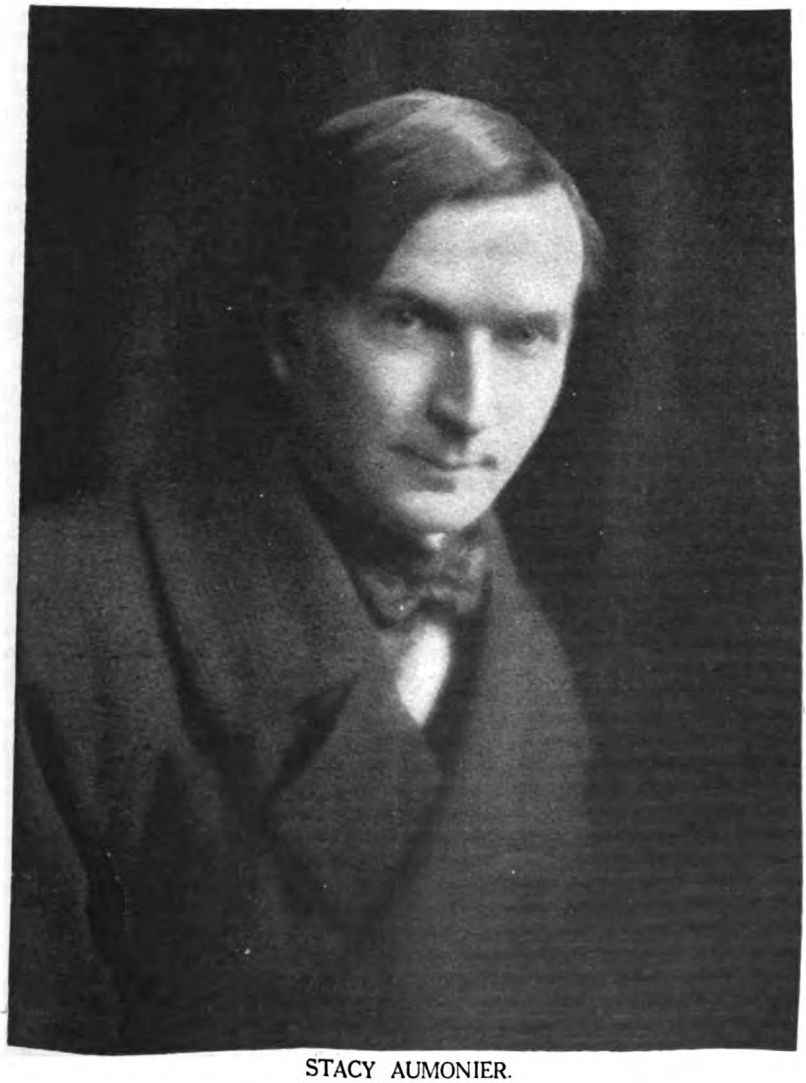
It really looked for a time as if he had found his job, but the nightly task of delighting an audience takes heavy toll of a man's nerve force. Stacy was both author and actor, his task was unshared, and he found the responsibility heavy. The time came when he went to his work with apprehension instead of confidence in his heart, when he looked at the tiers of faces with fear as to their reception of his efforts. When the war came, he was not altogether sorry to offer for other work.

The theatre had taught him he was not a strong man, and the war emphasized this fact. In spite of his efforts he did not get into the fighting line, yet he contrived to be of use both to the country which had persecuted his ancestors and to that which had given them a refuge. But he worked, poor chap, as so many did, too hard, and in the reaction from tasks which to the artist were uncongenial he turned to imaginative writing. Nothing has ever been difficult to him, any more than it has to Arnold Bennett, and for both men Fate has kept her thumbs up. Stacy's first story, "The Friends," a clever, if somewhat lengthy, study of drunkenness, sold at once, both in England and America, and was a good deal talked about. The subtle knowledge that informed it disclosed the fact that we had a new original writer. Stacy is one of those lucky people who get everything there is to be had out of what they do. He says he owes his success to his wife, that without her to encourage him he would have been content with a day of small things. From the first she seems to have divined her husband's possibilities and urged him to make the most of them. She is herself an artist; in fact,

the name of Gertrude Peppercorn is as well known in the musical world as that of Stacy Aumonier among writers. They have a son, Timothy, and of all the children in London this little boy seems to me, from the point of view of his ancestry and possible hereditary gifts, the most interesting. On the mother's side, music and manual dexterity; on the father's, line, colour, imagination, and that long line of craftsmen.

In appearance Stacy curiously resembles Napoleon. He has the same profile, the ultra-wide brow, the understanding blue eye, the dark, straight hair. It is amusing, that likeness, for, of all men, Stacy is the most irresponsible. However, he can be serious. An American film company which had obtained leave to give a performance to the convicts at Princetown induced him to go down to Dartmoor with them. I sat next him at dinner the day he returned, and he told us of the careful arrangements made for the prisoners. He had been deeply impressed by that humanitarian work. "And those men—murderers, thieves, every sort of criminal," he said, looking thoughtfully round the little table, "do not look any different from ordinary men. In fact," he added, pointing to a well-known editor and a solicitor of extreme respectability, neither of whom had ever injured him, "they are most of them rather like D—— and J——."

With his usual depth of perception he had realized the convicts, had perceived that their



STACY AUMONIER.
Camera portrait by E. O. Hoppé.

likeness to the ordinary man was greater than the difference which had made them criminal.

In literature it seems as if, at long last, Stacy Aumonier had found himself. In one of his books Arnold Bennett says: "Sometimes I halt and address myself: 'You may be richer or you may be poorer; you may live in greater pomp and luxury, or in less. The point is that you will always be, essentially, what you are now. You have no real satisfaction to look forward to except the satisfaction of continually inventing, fancying, imagining, scribbling. Say another thirty years of these emotional ingenuities, these interminable variations on the theme of beauty. Is it good enough?'

"And I answered: 'Yes.'"

I think that Stacy, too, has heard that question and answered "yes" to it.

ARNOLD BENNETT.

IN the Cornish village where I spend so much of my time people answer to three principal surnames—Old, Brenton, and Bennett. The last made me hope that, although Arnold Bennett wrote about Staffordshire, he might be of West Country stock. Not only had he a Cornish name, but I knew villagers who so closely resembled him that they might have been relatives. When, however, I ventured to ask him what part of England he came from, he disappointed me by saying, "The Midlands."

That a man from the thick middle of this country should resemble others who for many generations had farmed the north of Cornwall seemed to me curious until I remembered that the original inhabitants of this country retreated inland before the various invaders who fell on and ravaged the coast. They disappeared into the untrodden wastes beyond Birmingham, they fled to the hills of Wales and Scotland, they took refuge in the safe distance of Cornwall. Their descendants are still of nearly pure British descent—short, with black hair and blue eyes—and that explains how a Midlander can be the "very spit of a chap tealing land up to li'l St. Merryn." Also it makes us realize how slight is the effect a thousand years have on a type.

"But the name?" said I. "What does Bennett mean?" And its most celebrated owner thought it might be a contraction of Benedict, even as Conium is of Conynghame. Benedict was a name in common use in Elizabethan times—indeed, Shakespeare knew and used it. Which reminds me that the great dramatist was also a Midlander!

It is difficult to believe that Shakespeare in the least resembled the stereotyped portrait, with its air of complaisant stupidity, which has come down to us. At sight of it you exclaim, "That man write those poems, those plays? Impossible!" Moreover, if he had had a high forehead—always a sign of mediocre ability—an egg-shaped face with dully regular features, he would not have been given character parts as an actor, but would have played the lead, been Romeo, Hamlet, Troilus.

Is it not more likely that, coming probably of British stock, he had the broad, square forehead (which indicates reflective powers of a high order), the hazel eyes, bright behind long lashes, the irregular features of his fellow Midlander?

People talk glibly of the superman, the man who is more gifted than his fellows, the fire of whose life burns with a greater heat and fierceness. They suggest this crank and that eccentric as specimens of this Greater Humanity, but freaks are generally only pathological cases. The real superman seems to me the person whose vitality is greater than that of other men. I have of late been comparing the learning, power of concentration, accomplished work of such people as Zangwill, Wells, Shaw, Bennett, Galsworthy, with the powers and performances of average folks, and so great is the gulf between that I have been forced to the conclusion that the former are supermen. They are not freaks, they are not in any way abnormal, they have the qualities of ordinary men, but they are more highly organized, have greater resources in themselves, a fiercer energy and deeper emotions.

Take, for instance, the career of Arnold Bennett. At twenty-one he came to London and almost immediately he began to move what to other, less gifted, people would have been mountains! Without any special training he made his way into every department of literature, and his motto seems to have been, "If you want to do a thing, do it well, and see that you are paid well for doing it." In his efficient hands existence became a pleasant tour from one sort of amusing experience to another. "Life," he says in his new play, "is not a pleasure. It is a science." In a few years he had gained a world-wide reputation, and while doing so had collected about him the things that made for his comfort. He has dark furniture over which long-dead craftsmen have laboured lovingly, porcelain and silver

ARNOLD BENNETT.
Camera portrait by E. O. Hoppé.

which are frozen dreams of beauty, a yacht to carry him round and about the world, and a house in the most fashionable of London squares.

Without special training!

We sweat to give our children a start in the world, and these carefully-taught, highly-specialized creatures think themselves lucky if they are able to make a modest livelihood. They, you see, are average men and women, but Arnold Bennett——!

He comes of legal stock. His father was a lawyer, he himself worked—I suspect without enthusiasm—for three years at London University for a law degree, and eventually became a clerk in a solicitor's office. He did not know, not for a long time, that he was a creative artist. He had a cool, hard head, and he meant to make money, but he did not realize that he was to do so by writing novels and plays. However, he had not been a clerk for more than eighteen months when, just as he had grown cunning in the preparation of costs, he was jolted roughly out of that particular groove. A fellow-clerk who was leaving said to the brilliant youngster, "You've no business to be here, you ought to be doing something else. If I find you in this office next time I visit town, I shall look on you as a damned fool."

The mysterious adjuration had its effect, and young Arnold became a free-lance journalist. But not for long. Smart and cool as he was, the spiritual shame of perpetually striving after "catchiness" and "actuality," of touting for odd jobs, of producing gossip paragraphs, made him presently glad to accept work on the administrative side of a paper. It is difficult

to imagine Mr. Bennett the editor of a woman's paper; and yet I fancy his love of detail, domestic and other, must in some sort have fitted him for the amazing enterprise. While still an editor he wrote his first novel, "A Man From the North," and with his usual luck had it accepted ten days after he had sent it to a publisher. How cock-a-hoop he must have been! But, although accepted at once, it only brought him a pound over and above the cost of having the manuscript typewritten. In those days, with a group of like-minded friends, I was reading all the new books, and in a happy hour we chanced on "Anna of the Five Towns." We congratulated ourselves rapturously on having made a find. Here was the new-comer of promise, the young writer who was going to make a stir in the world; moreover, while England snored in ignorance, we had discovered him. We bought "Leonora," and our admiration grew. We had not the temerity to write to the unknown, but we greatly hoped that chance might help us to his acquaintance. I remember spending what seemed to me a lot of money in order to give copies of "The Old Wives' Tale" away as Christmas presents. Not that I like it best of Mr. Bennett's stories. I think he touched his top-note in "Clayhanger," when he described the death of Darius. As a piece of imaginative writing, that is worthy of being placed by the death of the mother in D. H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers."

WHEN Arnold Bennett became editor and novelist, he also became—such was his energy and *joie de vivre*—a reviewer, a dramatic critic, and, somewhat to his surprise, a playwright. "Milestones," which he wrote with Edward Knoblock, was not only an interesting and witty play, but it gave the actors a chance of showing what they could do with characters which aged a generation with every act. I remember that we went a little doubtfully, for, lovely as Mr. Knoblock's "Kismet" had been as a spectacle, it had not interested us as a play; while Arnold Bennett's novels had not led us to suppose he had a sense of dramatic form. The union of these two minds had, however, produced a play which I certainly, and I think most of the others, went to again and again.

His *début* as a dramatist taught Mr. Bennett that playwriting, when successful, meant "money in heaps." Freed from economic uncertainties, he was able to pause and look about. He perceived that, if he wanted to do good work, he must cultivate the habit of leisure, country leisure. Only the artist knows that a man should leave the development of creative work to his subconscious mind. He should not—unless he is content to produce the manufactured, commercial article—sweat over his plots and personages, but should keep his mind a blank until the work, no longer to be denied, rushes into that emptiness and fills it. A story is generally the better for having lain for some time below the surface of the artist's mind—I wonder how long Zeus carried Pallas Athene in his head before her will to live made him send for the smithy god to let her out by cracking open his skull? "Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow"—the ideal life, and Mr. Bennett laid hold of it. He has produced a vast quantity of work, and for its quality we have to thank the acres that he owned away from London.

He has an amazing memory, a passion for detail, and a mind which is eminently resourceful.

Once, when planning to build a house, I bethought me of having read a novel which gave some labour-saving devices. Thinking to find them in "Kipps," I read that excellent novel backwards. Unavailingly. Chancing on H. G. Wells at a party, I asked him where the passage was to be found.

"Oh, that's Bennett," said the other superman. "Denry's ideas. You'll find what you want in chapter —— of ——," and he paused in an effort to recollect the page.

Denry's device of a tap by the front door, which should enable his mother to wash over the step with the least possible expenditure of energy, interested me. "Oh—the house!" said Mr. Bennett, when I spoke of it. "But I don't know that I should like a tap there now. Irresistible temptation to boys——"

He seemed so entirely a man whose work was accomplished for him by an adequate brain that I asked one day if he could use his hands. Indignantly he went to the glazed shelves and took out a book.

It was the bound manuscript of "The Old Wives' Tale." He had illustrated it in missal fashion, written it in a small script that has a curly beauty of form and admirable spacing.

"Do you do all your manuscripts like that?" I asked, wondering over the love of fine things which must turn even an MS. into a thing of beauty.

"Mostly."

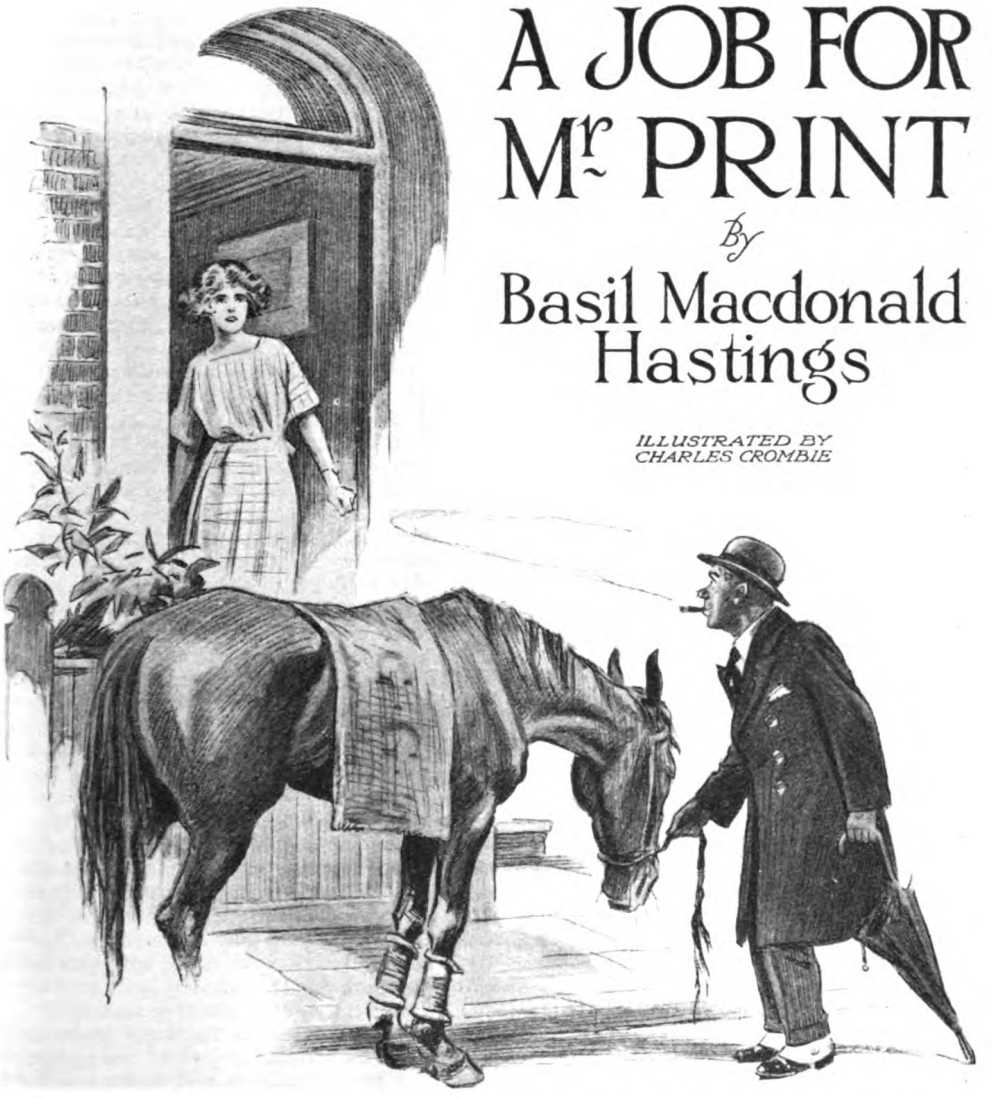
I suspect that the one pound profit he made on his first novel has put him out of love with our useful friend, the typewriter.

A JOB FOR Mr. PRINT

By

Basil Macdonald Hastings

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE



THEY tell the story now in railway trains, in hotel smoking-rooms, in back parlours on Sundays, in packed taxis returning from race-meetings, and in the bars of the cross-Channel steamers, but this is truly the first time it has been written out.

One February evening George Blake arrived late at the door of his villa home in Streatham. He knocked, and then retreated down the steps to the pavement again. Presently the door was jerked open sharply, and George's pretty wife, with a mass of auburn curls on her head and carpet slippers on her feet, appeared in the opening.

"Thought Tuesday was the last time you were going to keep such a nice thing as steak-and-kidney pudding waiting for ever till it wanted a hot-water bottle to unfreeze itself? Whatever are you doing down there? And whatever are you holding of?"

Cynthia Blake came to the edge of the steps.

"Can't you see it's a horse?" retorted her husband, gloomily.

"A horse! You've gone mad. Whatever do you want a horse for? Isn't it enough your making a book without buying the things? Fancy yourself now as an owner, do you? Oo-er! Mr. George Blake's Human Mistake wins the 'Unt Cup by three lengths. Strikes me you've gone potty, my lord."

"Don't carry on like that, Cynthy. This ain't a racehorse. He's only a little 'un, not more than a pony, and he must be hundreds of years old. Hundreds."

A terrible gloom settled on the vivid red countenance of George Blake. He had crisp curly hair and teeth like sea-washed pebbles, so that he looked most lovably comic when harassed.

"Only a little 'un. What's the good of him to us?"

"No good at all, Cynthy. But I couldn't help it. It's a legacy. A friend of mine bequeathed of him to me. Sort of souvenir."

"What friend?"

"Bob 'Argreaves, him that was buried under his satchel and betting tickets."

"Why was he buried under——? No, I don't mean that. What business had he giving you a horse? You never said you'd like a horse, did you?"

"He might have overheard me say sometimes as I'd eat the favourite."

"Don't come the comic. What are you going to do about it?"

"Well, if you was to open the side door, I'd lead him down into the garden."

"Oh, my heavenly aunt, this is what comes of marrying a bookmaker!" But pretty Cynthia went back into the house, and presently to the side door to unbolt it. For Cynthia admired the husband she bullied, and was always suspicious of his keen sense of humour. This horse was a nuisance, but George would make her giggle about it presently. She was sure of that. And Cynthia liked to giggle.

"Did I ever tell you the story of the Scotchman, Cynthy, what was given a horse and trap? He looked 'em up and down and he says, 'Where's the whip?'"

"I'll give you the whip in a half of two ticks."

"Supposing I buys you a little governess cart to go with him? Only trouble 'ud be you'd have to walk behind and push. Oh, he is so old."

"What am I going to feed him on?"

"What about that packet of seed that was left over when the cat broke the gate of the parrot cage? All right, Cynthy. He don't want no food to-night. Coming along the Brixton Road I called in at the White Horse. 'Food for man and beast,' I says. 'See that my steed is well watered and well hayed,' I cries out to the chap in the garage, at the same time throwing him a guinea."

"You eat up your steak-and-kidney and p'r'aps I'll make you a Welsh rarebit."

"Ah! Wish he'd been a rabbit now."

George dealt some sweeping blows at the piled plate before him, and Cynthia smirked happily to herself. Husbands are not husbands unless they eat.

When the last morsel of the Welsh rarebit had been consumed, and a large bottle of screw-stoppered ale had been drained, George condescended to tell his pretty wife a good deal more about the pony in the garden. Cynthia laughed a great deal, and once had tears in her eyes, which George kissed away. Then Cynthy slapped George, but he protested nevertheless that she was "the peachiest peach" between Newmarket and Hurst Park, even though she had no business to wear carpet slippers with silk stockings, which got him slapped again. So that, horse or no horse, all was gas and gaiters that evening in Verbena Avenue, Streatham.

NOW we transfer our attention to the personality of one Francis Hooper Print, a solicitor. F. H. Print had served his articles with a distinguished man, but when final examinations were over he set up to practise in a humble way at Putney. He had no ambition, was a fine classical scholar, distinctly deaf, and drank alcohol with great reluctance when he had a bad cold. For housekeeper he had his only sister.

Agatha Print was a fine woman, as they say in the nineteenth-century novels, but her features were severe. Draped in toga and whatever else Roman Emperors wore, she could have gone to a fancy-dress ball as Julius Cæsar. She ran the house of Francis very capably for him, said "Yes" and "I know" when he talked about Attica or quoted Cato, and, while despising her bachelor brother in secret, read novels in which heroines dressed exclusively in dove-grey were strained, like potatoes, to the breasts of tall young men dressed exclusively in Harris tweeds. She made toffee on Saturdays, and made it well.

One night Agatha heard a man screaming for help. She ran in the dark towards the voice. Two men, she saw, were standing over a prostrate form and kicking it. She shrieked hysterically, lifted her umbrella, and charged down upon the group. Her umbrella came down smartly on the head of one of the attackers. There were some oaths, a lifted fist, another wild scream from Agatha, and then the second of the two ruffians got the point of her umbrella full in his mouth. Windows in the street rattled up and the two men ran away.

The man on the ground proved to be Bob Hargreaves, a bookmaker. He was a simple, sweet-natured soul who used bad language and drank too much. In the course of the acquaintance which followed upon her heroic rescue, Agatha determined to reform him. The sequel was inevitable. Mr. Hargreaves confined himself to "Blows."

went "on the water-wagon," and gained a bride.

Useless to explore the reasons of a refined woman for marrying beneath her. Women certainly have a passion for redeeming men, but they shrink from vulgarity. However, a woman may find the intense refinement of her ordinary environment too oppressive, and aim wildly at a complete contrast. Francis, the solicitor, probably drove Agatha into the arms of Bob Hargreaves, the bookie.

Poor Francis! What an abashed man was he when he heard the news! He ate but one veal cutlet for lunch instead of two, and they suited him. Presently he made it clear to Agatha that he did not wish to have any further communication with her, and advertised for another housekeeper.

Years, during which Agatha had three children and was moderately happy with her bucolic Robert, passed over the head of F. H. Print, who, despite his profession, appeared to take no interest in mundane affairs. The truth of the matter was that he subsisted on a small private income and scarcely ever handled any legal business. He read Cicero at the office, Pliny in train and omnibus, and Homer and Virgil at home. He was only once seen to be excited, and that was when they changed the pronunciation of Latin at Westminster School.

Bob Hargreaves died. He was not kicked to death, but died of a polite complaint, his only success in the sphere of manners, in the arms of his Agatha.

Agatha wrote to Francis. She pointed out that she was left poorly off and, for the children's sake, would be glad of her brother's legal help. Francis reproved her for her indelicacy, but gratitude for the death of "that red-faced robber" guided his steps to his sister's home. Here, after some search, was found a will.

It was a quaint affair, written on a sheet of foolscap, but duly witnessed and in reasonable order. Francis knew that it would be accepted for probate. The trouble was that, although the net personalty did not amount to more than three thousand pounds, there were a number of bequests, and the widow was to receive the residue.

Francis, to his credit, puzzled long over the terms of that will and his sister's straitened circumstances. He really did make a genuine effort on her behalf. The trouble was how much would be left over when the legacies had been arranged for, and Francis did not forget that if Agatha had no money she would not forget that he had.

ABOUT three months after the death of Bob Hargreaves, that night in February upon which we have already made the acquaintance of George and Cynthia Blake, a company of ten men ascended the stairs to the office of F. H. Print. They included George Blake, and were all bookmakers. Each had come to be informed of the details of his legacy under the will of Robert Hargreaves, deceased.

The gathering swamped the tiny room of Francis Print. Had they been thin, small men there would not have been space for them, so that they heard from Mr. Print with some relief that he was going to ask them all to step across the road to some larger premises.

The shrivelled little man with a wisp of a white Imperial put on a large overcoat and a very small hat and headed the procession. The ten bookmakers, all strangely silent and behaving as they would at a funeral, heaved themselves after him. Presently they found themselves in a stable lit by lanterns.

"Now, gentlemen," said little Mr. Print, in his hard, bird-like voice, "may I read your names?" The bookmakers grunted. "You are all present, I take it? Well, gentlemen, it has been my pleasant duty to inform you by letter of your good fortune, but I thought I had better defer till now the details of your bequests. I should imagine that you all shared with the late Mr. Hargreaves a highly praiseworthy love of animals. He was, as some of you may know, what is known as a bookmaker, and doubtless loved horses for their own sakes."

There was a little fidgeting and coughing.

"Now, Mr. Hargreaves has so willed that you shall each receive a souvenir of his friendship for you. Six of you"—here Mr. Print mentioned the names—"are to receive gifts of an equine character, and the remaining four, oddly enough, a specimen of the order *Primates*. It may be that these four have on occasion made the late Mr. Hargreaves aware of their desire for such a pet."

Big Bert Roof stepped forward.

"Don't want to interrupt you, Mr. Print, but I don't believe none of us knows what you are getting at." Mr. Print, being deaf, made Mr. Roof repeat his words.

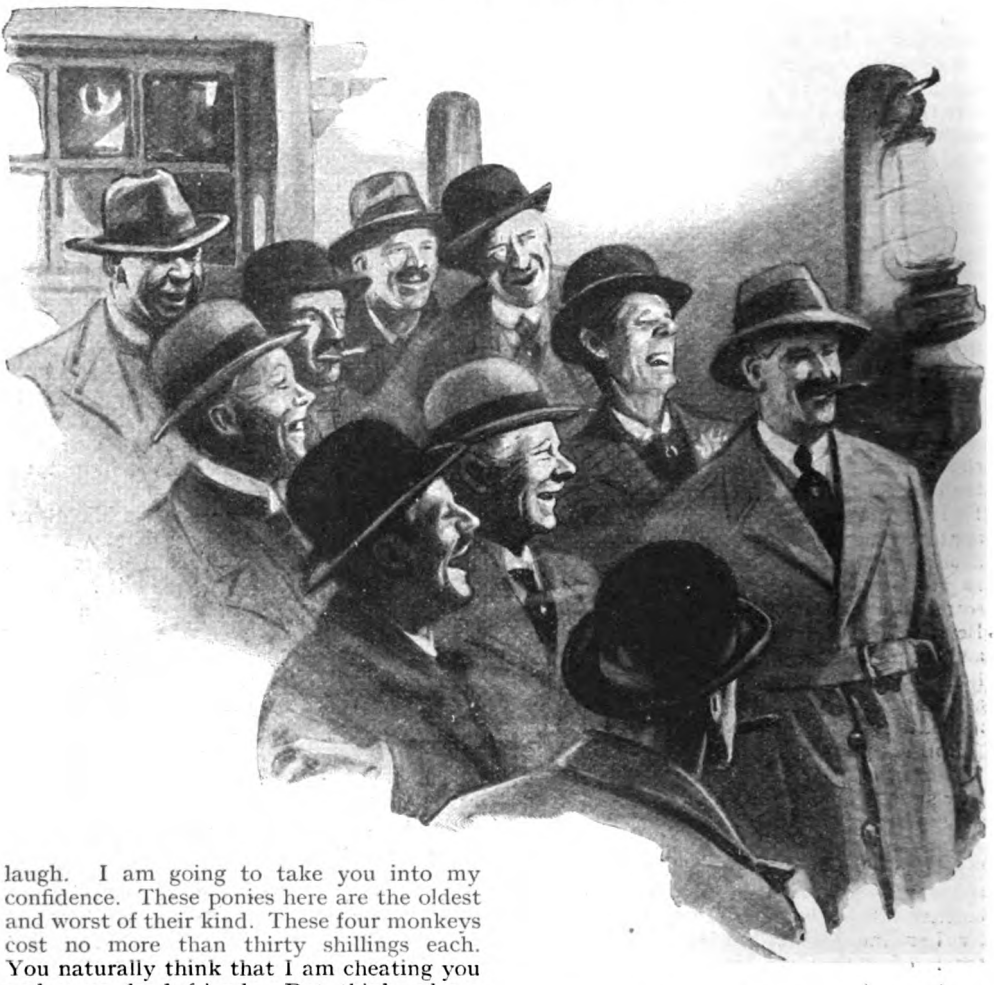
"Look around you, sir. There are the six equine souvenirs, and here, in this cage, the four monkeys."

"Equine souvenirs! Monkeys!"

"Certainly. The will provided that four of you were to have a monkey each and the other six a pony apiece."

A yell of derision went up. Was it possible that the old fool did not know that a pony was twenty-five pounds and a monkey no less than five hundred of the same beautiful pictures of the Houses of Parliament?

"Gentlemen, one moment before you



laugh. I am going to take you into my confidence. These ponies here are the oldest and worst of their kind. These four monkeys cost no more than thirty shillings each. You naturally think that I am cheating you and your dead friend. But think, please think, of the widow and her fatherless children. The estate does not amount to more than three thousand pounds, a poor sum, gentlemen, when you think of modern rents and clothes and school-bills. I know that perhaps I should have bought you thoroughbred ponies, or allowed you to choose them for yourselves; I know that those who inherited monkeys might have wished to select their own simian specimens, a baboon or a macaque or a marmoset. But I determined to throw myself on your charity. If you accept these admittedly paltry specimens, you will be doing a good turn to your friend's widow and his heart-broken children."

There was a pause, during which Mr. Print blew his nose.

Then a scowling bookmaker stepped forward.

"This is all very well about the widow and kids," said he, "but I think you ought to know you've made a proper ninny of yourself."

Big Bert Roof, richest and noisiest of the men of Tattersall's, laid a restraining hand on the speaker's shoulder.

"Let it go, Joe," he whispered. Then he turned to Mr. Print. "I think I can say on behalf of all the boys that you done the right thing, Mr. Lawyer. You see, if you'd paid out the legacies as they was meant, I mean if they'd been first-class trotting ponies and real class monkeys, there wouldn't have been much of that there three thousand left for the widder and Gawd-forbids. Old Bob, when he made that will, must have had a lot more money than when he died. So I reckon you was right to buy the legacies as cheap as you could get 'em." There was a murmur of applause. "And tell Mrs. 'Argreaves from all the boys that we're all perfectly content with our presents, and Gawd bless her."

The ten bookmakers found themselves in a stable lit by lanterns. "Well, gentlemen," said little Mr. Print, "it has been my pleasant duty to inform you by letter of your good fortune."

Out into the night went six big bookmakers leading six ponies, and four even bigger bookmakers nursing four flea-bitten Jackos. And that night in ten houses there was Homeric laughter and a tear or two.

On the following day Mr. Print rang up Messrs. Ladbroke.

"Caterpillar for the three-thirty," said he. "I want a pony each way."

"Thank you, Mr. Print."

You can't beat a clever lawyer!

THE TRAP

by

MYRA SAWHILL

ILLUSTRATED BY GRAHAM SIMMONS

GEORGE RYDER paused as he went into the doorway, and looked blankly round the machine shop. The man who worked next to him, and whose business it was to watch his every move, was not there. Ryder pushed back a shock of grey hair from his forehead and stared. Could it be, he wondered incredulously, that the mechanism that had hedged him about for twelve long years had broken down in this one spot? The thought was almost beyond credence, but wave upon wave of hope was surging through him, almost nauseating in its cumulative intensity.

Many a time, through the long grey years, he had felt something of this same thing; but never for long. Always he had known, almost at once, that it was a delusion. This was different, somehow; this time he felt instinctively that he was free. He had been watched as usual on his way to work—of that he was certain. That he was not under surveillance here, he was equally certain. It might be for only a few minutes.

The momentary paralysis passed. Ryder's mind was working in quick, staccato flashes. His chance, his great opportunity, had come! If he made just the right use of these precious minutes he might get away. He turned swiftly, and without a word to anyone left the machine shop by a rear door opening on an alley. No one was in sight. He forced himself to walk along at a moderate gait, not fast enough to attract attention.

There was not much time for elaborate planning, but there must be no mistakes. There was no room for a single bungling move. Rapidly he thought it all over. Trains were out of the question, of course. In a short time, even at this very moment perhaps, certainly as soon as it was understood that he had slipped through the net—and that would not be long—every train that left the city would be watched.

A motor would solve the difficulty, if he could find one. With good luck he ought to be able to hire a car, get out of town, and reach the mountains before he could be traced. He had plenty of ready money; he was always careful of that in the hope of some such occurrence as this.

No motors were to be had in this vicinity. This was a working-man's community, a region of factories and mills. He would have to go into the heart of the city to pick up a motor on the street; it would be too risky to go to a garage for one, they might be on the look-out even now. Then, too, men dressed as mechanics do not make a practice of hiring motors for cross-country trips. It would take a few of his precious minutes, but he must change his appearance, Ryder knew.

Twenty-two years before, George Ryder, then a man of thirty-eight, in the employ of the Cosmopolitan Express Company, had in his care thirty thousand pounds for transference to an isolated manufacturing plant.

Ryder was not a weakling. He did not yield to temptation because he could not resist it, he did not fall because he could not stand. He wanted that money, and he took it—that was all. Moral sense, not will power, had been lacking.

Ryder's immediate chief, a man named Weston, who for a short time had had charge of the sealed package containing the money, had been tried with Ryder. The evidence, all circumstantial, but forming an unbroken chain, had been equally strong against both. Accomplices in crime they were judged to be. Weston, never very

robust and apparently fretting over the injustice done him, did not live out his sentence. But to George Ryder those ten long years, in which he had paid his penalty, had been made endurable by the thought of the wealth awaiting him at the end.

Sometimes during his imprisonment he had thought grimly of Weston and of the strange trick Fate had played his one-time chief. He recalled his supposed accomplice's manner during the trial. He recalled certain stolen glances at himself—glances, as it were, of remorse. It was Weston, the innocent, rather than Ryder, the guilty, who had acted the part of the criminal detected in his crime.

NOW Weston was dead and he, Ryder, was free. But the company that had gone his bond when he went to work for the Cosmopolitan Express had its own ideas regarding the stolen and hidden wealth, had its own reputation to sustain. At the head of the bonding company was a man who did not intend to be fooled with—a man with keen grey eyes and a formidable chin.

"Get that money if it takes fifty years!" had been his order to his men. "Get it, that's all."

So it happened that Ryder got out of prison to find his freedom merely nominal. He tried hiding at first, in various ex-convict warrens, but without success. He was watched, and he knew it. He had no money, so he had to give up the idea of hiding until he could throw off pursuit; he went to work.

As soon as he had saved a little money he had slipped away quietly to some other place, but never without being followed. In this way he had gone from city to town, from town to country, had doubled on his tracks, lain dormant for weeks at a time, but always the net was still about him. Never had he felt it safe to attempt to reach the place where he had hidden the money.

Now, after all these years, twelve of them, he had found a loose thread, a tiny break in the mesh of the net. He had slipped through, and he meant to make a dash for his freedom. He was getting old—if he did not get away soon, it would be too late. He had a chance now, he meant to make the best of it.

Briskly he turned into the first big shop he came to. It was not a first-class place, but one in which his present appearance would not cause comment.

George Ryder had been a clerk when he turned off at the forks of the road, twenty-two years before, and a clerk does not easily let himself down into the working-man's class. Circumstances had forced Ryder to do this—it is not easy for ex-convicts to find employment; but there were certain little habits of dress that he had never given up. Invariably he wore a white linen collar. It had cost him many a jeering comment from fellow-workmen, but it stood him in good stead now. It would have taken time to have bought, and changed into, the right kind of a shirt and collar. But granted the all-essential white collar, the rest would not be difficult.

It was an October day, with enough tang in the air to make a top-coat acceptable. Ryder selected a dark, good-looking one that concealed admirably his ordinary working clothes, a soft felt hat of different style and colour from the one he was wearing, and a pair of new shoes.

All this took much less time than the ordinary shopper would suppose, for as a buyer he had no competition, the day's business had not yet begun.

The man who had waited on him, and one or two others who had watched his purchases with more or less interest, since they had no customers of their own, might remember the incident later; but there was nothing about it to rouse their suspicions at the moment, and it would be some hours, probably, before they would be questioned concerning it, if they should ever be, and by that time, if his plans held, it need not matter to George Ryder.

Ryder took the precaution to leave the shop by a different entrance from the one he had used when he went in—one that opened on another street. For a few moments he walked along in comparative confidence, and then somehow this deserted him—he began to feel that he was being followed. After all, he thought, he must be known by sight to practically every one of the detective persuasion in town. His heart sank.

A large clock with a double dial, a jeweller's advertisement, hung above the kerbstone so that a face could be seen from either direction along the street. Ryder passed this a short distance, then turned and looked back as though to see the time. He glanced casually over the throng of people on the pavement, and his practised eye picked out a man of whom he was instantly suspicious. He might be mistaken, of course, but the chances were he was not. This hope was not to end in a blind alley, as every other had done, if he could help it, Ryder determined with gritted teeth. He would get rid of that man somehow. He was getting old—he felt that this was his last chance, and he meant to hold on to it. Anyone who got in his way could look out—that was all!

Perhaps, though, his nerves were getting bad and he was alarmed over nothing. He would put the thing to a test and find out if this man was actually a shadow.

He walked on for a short distance, turned into an arcade running through a large shop, out at the far end of it, and continued on his way. Then he stopped in a hesitating manner, felt in one overcoat pocket, then in the other. After an instant of apparent thought, he turned swiftly, as a man might who had lost or forgotten something and had made up his mind to go back for it, and there, scarcely more than a few paces from him, was the man he had noticed before! No further doubt was possible.

Without apparently being at all aware of this man, Ryder retraced his steps for a short distance with the quick, purposeful gait of one who has a definite objective. When he was well past the regular crossing he plunged recklessly into the traffic.

He got through the first line of vehicles and paused a moment for an opening in the traffic going in the opposite direction. A man stepped up from behind, almost beside him. The game was up, Ryder knew, unless a last desperate move would free him.

A second time he plunged into the moving traffic—there was an available opening before a truck that moved a trifle more deliberately than the car in front of it. The man behind moved forward too, as Ryder felt with every nerve in his body. There, right in front of the murderous truck, Ryder flung out his right foot with a quick backward movement, caught the left foot of the other man, and tripped him. Ryder himself had just time to spring safely into the open space beyond the truck.

There was a sharp, terrified shriek or two, the grinding of frantically applied brakes, the shrill whistle of the police. When Ryder reached the kerbstone a little knot of people had closed in around the spot where he had stood an instant before. No one was taking any notice of him. The interest centred, as he had figured it would, in the victim of the tragedy. No one had seen the details, no suspicion of foul play had crossed anyone's mind.

Ryder looked at the scene with careless interest for an instant, then took the inside of the pavement, next the buildings, and walked on at a usual pace. He had no real compunction as to what he had done. A fox would not regret any strategy that would put a pursuing pack out of the running, and in this regard Ryder's philosophy was as primitive.

He must get away as quickly as possible, he realized. By some miracle, the man he had thrown to destruction might not have been killed; he might even be conscious and able to tell what had really taken place. Clearly George Ryder had no time to lose.

He hurried as much as he dared, and before he had reached the second cross street he came to an open touring car with the legend "For Hire" placarded on its wind shield.

The driver, mightily pleased to have picked up a customer for a long country trip, lost no time in getting under way, and before many minutes had passed Ryder was leaving the outskirts of the city behind him. They ought to reach the fair-sized city at the foot of the mountains about noon at the speed they were going, and there would be no reason for slowing down; the roads, Ryder knew, were excellent.

Deeply contented with what he had accomplished so far, Ryder's tension relaxed. For a time his mind drifted idly, as a tired swimmer rests himself by floating with the current. By degrees, long-past events began to creep into his consciousness. He thought of his love for pretty Annie Blake. She had had only one rival in his mind, but that was a powerful one—thirty thousand pounds. For this Ryder had sacrificed her and the prime of his own life. Twenty-two years—twenty-two years! He had reached an age when it is possible to realize that life is not a continuous performance for the individual, that it does come to an end; and in view of this knowledge the twenty-two years were achingly precious. Oh, well, what did it matter, if only he succeeded now?

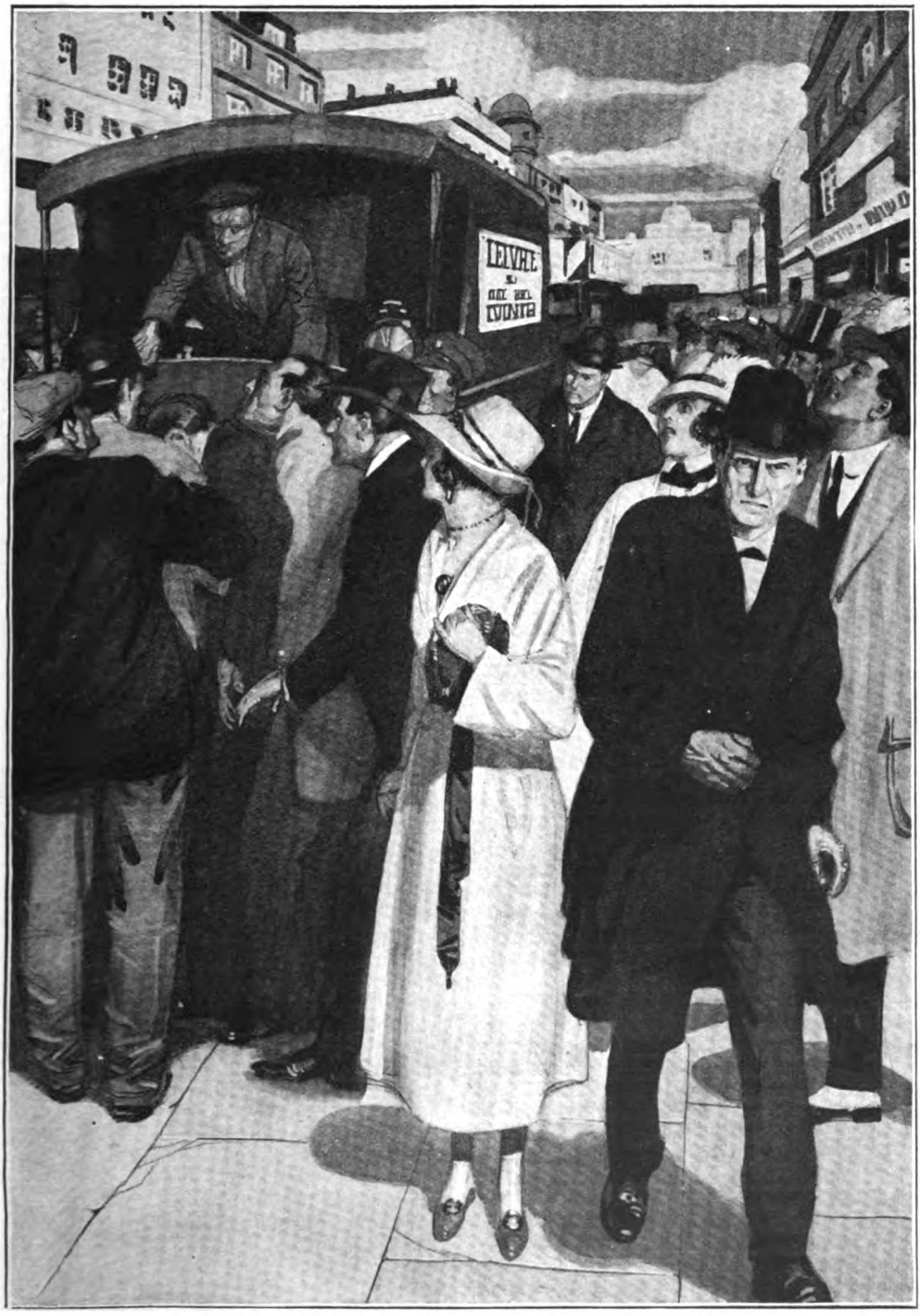
AND succeed he would. Of this he was confident. It is a long lane that has no turning, Ryder reminded himself, and thrilled with the consciousness that this was the turn, that even now the long, long road that had held him prisoner was swinging round in the direction he longed to go.

His mind comfortably at ease, Ryder gave himself to the work of planning out each detail of what he meant to do. Carefully, deliberately, he went over the ground and thought it all out.

The bonding company would, of course, do everything to find him; but they had never had any clue as to the whereabouts of the loot he had taken. They would not think of looking for him up there in the mountains. At any rate, he had a place to hide until the pursuit lost force. Then, when it seemed safe, he would try for the frontier. A neatly trimmed beard would change his clean-shaven face beyond the danger of chance recognition.

On the whole, he felt very well satisfied in regard to pursuit; but he could not entirely subdue a haunting fear that the money might be gone. It began to seem incredible to him that it could have remained where he had put it for nearly a quarter of a century.

Isolated as the hiding-place had been when Ryder selected it twenty-two years before,



No one was taking any notice of him. The interest centred in the victim of the tragedy. He looked at the scene for an instant, then walked on at a usual pace.

he knew enough of the development of that region to realize that it was not so isolated now. Those gentle, placid, leafy mountains were too lovely to have escaped the discerning, and summer estates were plentiful there.

What if someone had built a house on a certain spur up there among the hills? Sweat that was icy cold started out on Ryder's forehead and the palms of his clenched hands. This was horrible, horrible! He would find the money—he must!

So engrossed was he in his own thoughts that he barely noticed the chauffeur of the car drawing up in front of a garage. While the tank was being filled the man muttered something about a tool he wanted and went inside the building. He came back presently, lifted the hood, made some slight adjustment, gave the borrowed tool to the garage attendant, jumped into the car, and drove on.

Time and time again, since they had left town two hours before, Ryder had glanced back stealthily to see if there was any sign of pursuit. Occasionally cars had appeared in the distance behind them and had turned off at cross roads or otherwise disposed of themselves. Once a great touring car had apparently trailed them for some miles, then it flashed past, and Ryder was relieved to see two veiled and befurred women in it. During the entire trip nothing of significance had occurred, nothing to cause the least apprehension in his mind.

TWO hours or so after they left the little garage they reached the city at the foot of the mountains that Ryder had mentioned to the driver of the car as his destination, and there the trip ended.

Hurriedly Ryder ate some dinner in a small restaurant and then paid a hasty visit to a hardware shop, where he bought a sharp, slender garden trowel and an efficient-looking chisel. These he put into the side pockets of his coat; the overcoat concealed them. He reached the station in time to catch a through train that he knew was due about this time. He did not intend to go more than thirty miles or so, but as a precaution he bought a long-distance ticket. He found a seat, stayed there until his ticket had been examined, then walked back to the observation car always carried during the run across the mountains. This he was able to leave when the train reached the little town on the crest of the ridge, where he intended to get off, without causing any comment from anyone who might have known where he had booked for. He had no luggage and the plan worked well.

Many times since he had left this little town twenty-two years before George Ryder had passed through the place, never daring to stop. He had always looked wistfully along the road leading out to the right and sworn to himself that it would not be long before he would give those villains the slip. Years had passed, and never until to-day had he been able to accomplish it.

It was with a sensation of dazed astonishment that he found himself walking swiftly along this very road. So often had he dreamed of doing this that the actual doing of it seemed a dream, like the others. He could not force himself to understand that it was reality.

The coveted spot was a long distance from the village; but he had not dared to get anyone to drive him out. On and on he trudged, the afternoon sun uncomfortably hot on his back—on and on. Ryder had thought he remembered every turn in the road, every tree, every distinctive spot between the town and his destination. But twenty-two years play queer tricks with memory, and he found that certain stretches of the road had lengthened, while others had shortened unaccountably. Long stretches of trees had been cut; many distinctive marks had been altered completely. Ryder had counted on this somewhat, but not to this extent. It puzzled him, he grew bewildered—did not always know exactly where he was. But he held on steadily; it was late afternoon before he admitted that he had lost his bearings.

The metal despatch-box which held the money had been hidden in a cave, a tiny secret place he had known as a boy and had recalled instantly when the need for a hiding-place had come to him. He had reached the place where by rights the cave should be, but it was not to be found. Its entrance had always been inconspicuous, a narrow slit between two boulders, one of which was set behind, and slightly past, the other; but now it had seemingly vanished entirely.

Madly, crazily, he searched, tearing aside rank growths of vines and plunging into impossible thickets that took revenge on his clothing and his face. Exhausted, disheartened beyond belief, daylight almost gone, he sank down at length and stared moodily around him. A long time he sat there, wondering if the whole thing had been a dream, or if, perhaps, he had lost his mind and these surroundings were unreal.

A soft little furry creature, deceived by his motionless figure, crossed in front of him and then, in sudden panic, turned abruptly to the right and vanished.

It had caught Ryder's attention. He had not seen it clearly, and he wondered curiously what it was and where it could

have gone. He got up, turned to the right, and walked a step or two to the spot where the little creature had darted into the underbrush, drew aside the branches of a giant mountain laurel, and—there was the entrance to the cave!

It was perhaps characteristic of George Ryder that this bit of sheer luck elated him as nothing else could have done. If he had found the cave by diligent searching he would have accepted the result for what it was worth; but this was luck—it meant that things were coming his way at last.

It had grown quite dark now; it seemed as though the very last shaft of light had made his discovery possible. With his electric torch in his hand, Ryder plunged ahead and wormed his way between the boulders. Placed as they were, the space between them formed a little entrance at right angles to the main part of the cave. Ryder wondered if anyone but himself had ever found it.

ONCE inside, he looked round with satisfaction. No matter how much the outside of these hills had changed, the inside was gratifyingly unaltered. Here he would be safe. Even with a light in the cave, its entrance was so constructed that it could not be seen outside. The rest would be easy, unless someone else had found his treasure. He stood an instant with his shoulders against the inside boulder, then paced off twenty steps, wheeled squarely to the right, and there, on the floor of the cave, close against its overhanging wall, was the same slab of granite that he had held painstakingly in his memory for one third of his normal lifetime. With the electric torch propped in position with a loose stone or two, he set to work with trowel and chisel.

As the stone began to loosen Ryder's heart beat sickeningly. In all human probability the despatch-box was underneath this, just where he had placed it so very, very long ago; but until he saw it, felt it, opened it, and found the money inside, he could not be certain, could not feel absolutely secure. There had been so many disappointments, so very many!

Then at last the stone was loose. It would test his strength to lift it; he was not as strong as he had been when he placed it there. Ryder laid down his tools, bent forward, grasped the stone firmly with both hands, and slowly lifted it enough to enable him to slide it over on the edge of the cavity in which it had lain so long.

With hands that shook with uncontrollable excitement he grabbed the torch and held it down into the bed of the stone. Covered over somewhat with finely pulverized earth he found the despatch-box. He gave a hoarse, exultant exclamation and grasped the handle on its lid.

Ryder never knew what made him look up just then, his hand still resting on the metal despatch-box, and glance back over his shoulder toward the entrance to the cave. For a moment he doubted his sanity. Not more than fifteen feet from him, in the half-darkness beyond the reach of his electric torch, it seemed that he could see the shadowy figures of three men.

There was no sound, no motion. He stared at them, dumb, incredulous. Then, as his eyes grew accustomed to that half-light, he could make them out quite plainly. Two steady hands held something that gleamed softly, ominously.

Ryder's mind cleared. He made a quick gesture toward his hip pocket, but a bullet promptly sang close to his ear, and he did not make another.

"Hold your hands up!" a voice commanded harshly.

Ryder held them up.

"So we've got you at last!" the same voice exclaimed with obvious satisfaction, and a large, strong-featured man stepped forward into the brighter circle of light.

"Not that we want you—don't care a damn about you; but you've got something down in that little hole that we've been hungering for."

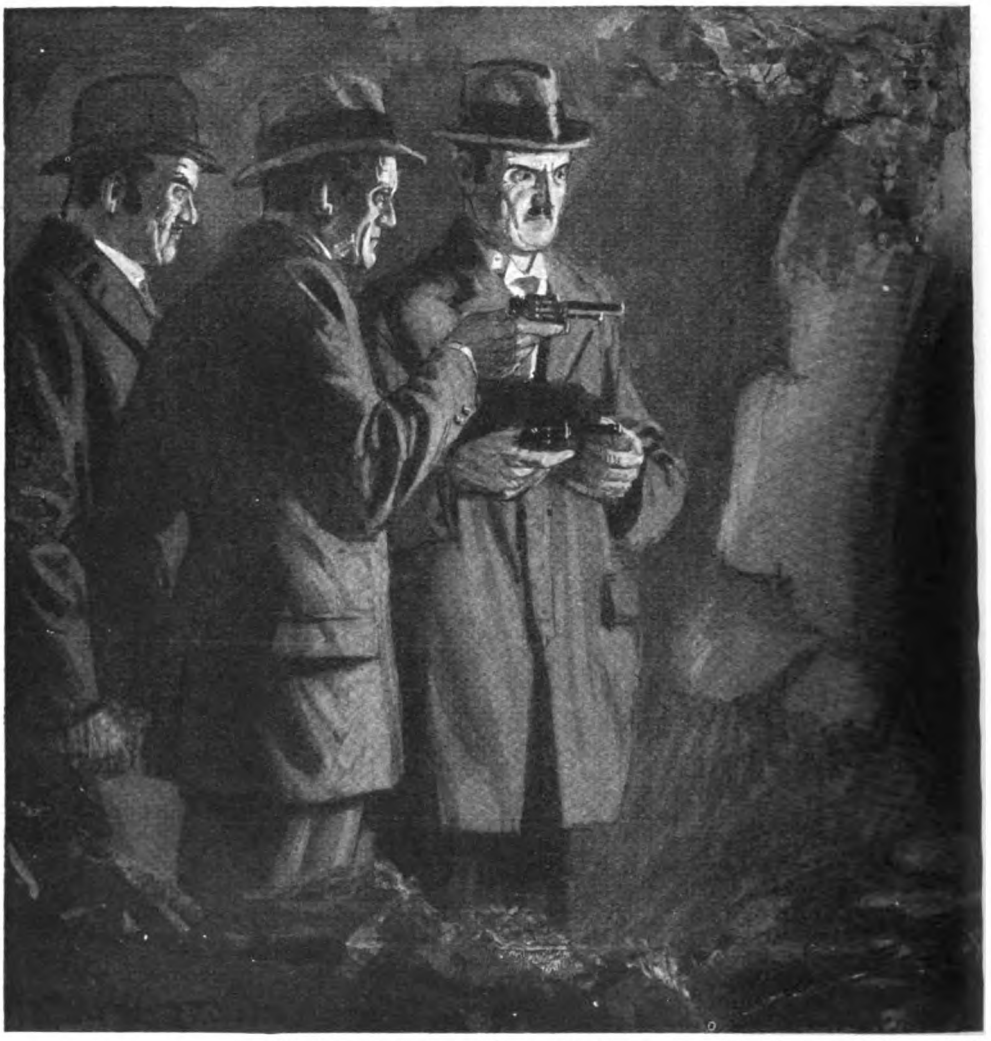
George Ryder, hands above his grey head, watched the other man dully as he stooped and lifted out the despatch-box. The hinge had rusted and the lid was prised off easily.

The large-featured man gave a short whistle of astonishment as he lifted from the box the identical package of bank-notes, its seals unbroken, that Ryder had taken twenty-two years before.

"Never opened it! All that money still here!" The big man swore softly from sheer emotion as he weighed the packet thoughtfully in his hand. He turned and looked at George Ryder curiously.

"Thought you had given us the slip, eh? Reckoned you'd think that; but we had our eyes on you every minute of the time." The big detective chuckled contentedly. "It was a trap, of course. We had tried the same thing before, but you'd always been too sharp for us. This time you walked right into it.

"Y'see, we had notified every public motor in the city to be on the look-out. Remember stopping at a garage for a moment? Well, the chauffeur went inside, called us up, and told us where you were going. I had you followed from the time you dismissed the car: and I came on as fast as I could myself. That fellow you



Ryder never knew what made him look up just then and glance back
hands held something that

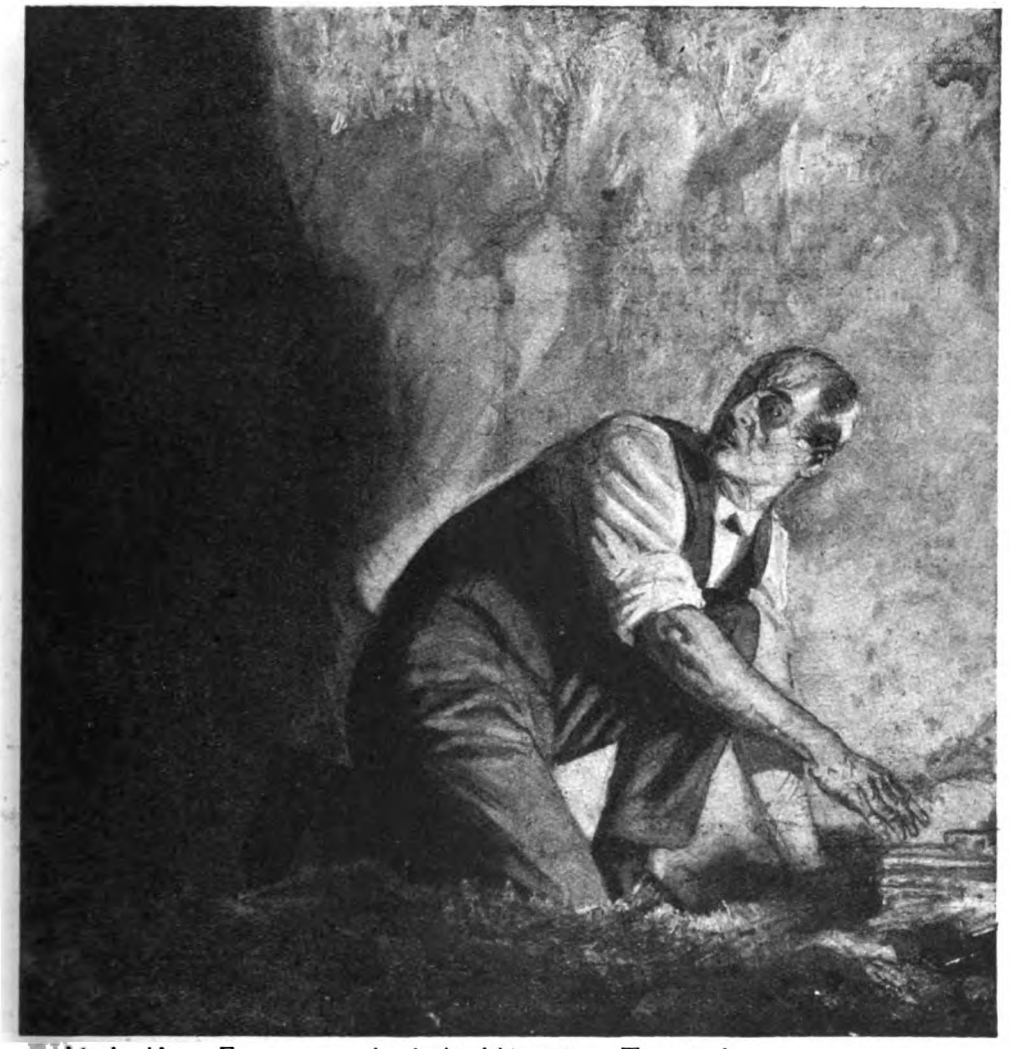
tried to do for when you crossed the road was a clerk—had nothing to do with the police. He's nursing a broken arm and some other minor injuries at a hospital and wondering how he happened to stumble! You're lucky about that—might have been an ugly charge to face."

The detective stood silent. He turned the package over and over in his hand thoughtfully.

"Funny," he said at length, "but somehow I can't seem to believe that we have actually found this stuff. Been hunting it for twelve years. Twelve years! Makes a man feel good to turn a trick he's been working on for as long as that. It cost the company a pile of money, too; but they won't care for that, now they've finally got what they started after. The boss of that concern deserves to feel good, and he's going to!

"Come to think of it," he said to Ryder, "you put in something like twenty years or more on this thing, and then lost! Well, it's been a great game. You certainly led us a chase, but it's over now. What do you say to opening this thing? You might as well have one look at the stuff, Ryder. I must say it will look good to me, too!"

The other men moved forward and watched eagerly; packets of thirty thousand pounds unearthed in caves are not a matter



over his shoulder. For a moment he doubted his sanity. Two steady gleamed softly, ominously.

of common experience. George Ryder gazed dumbly at the capable hands of the big detective as they broke the seals and folded back the brittle paper cover. Then, for a long moment, no one even seemed to breathe.

With a hoarse cry George Ryder flung himself forward and, with no interference from anyone, gathered up the contents of the wrapper. Frantically he examined it, slip after slip of blank paper, yellow with age. There was not one single bank-note in the lot!

"But the money—the money! Where—where—who——" the detective gasped brokenly.

"Weston—it was Weston—must have been—who robbed the company. He must have—taken out the money—substituted this junk—before—I ever—saw the package! He was the chap—who had—the money—and—he died!" Ryder, conscious only of a curious, detached calm, such a calm as perhaps the dying know, forced his frozen lips to form the words.

On the floor of the cave lay a small heap of waste paper, a Jester that mocked the man whose shaking fingers had dropped it there, mocked all of them in whose destinies it had played its grim and silent part.

PERPLEXITIES.

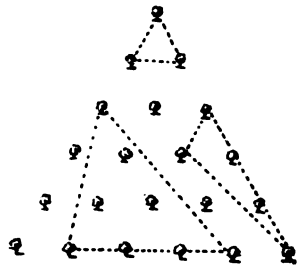
By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

688.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

AN American correspondent asks me to find a number composed of any number of digits that may be correctly divided by 2 by simply transferring the last figure to the beginning. He has apparently come across our No. 476, with the conditions wrongly stated. If you are to transfer the *first* figure to the *end* it is solved by 3 1 5 7 8 9 4 7 3 6 8 4 2 1 0 5 2 6, and a solution may easily be found from this with any given figure at the beginning. But if the figure is to be moved from the *end* to the *beginning*, there is no possible solution for the divisor 2. But there is a solution for the divisor 3. Can you find it?

689.—THE TRIANGULAR PLANTATION.

A MAN had a plantation of twenty-one trees set out in the triangular form shown in our diagram. If he wished to enclose a triangular piece of ground with a tree at each of the three angles, how many different ways of doing it are there from which he might select? The dotted lines show three ways of doing it. How many are there altogether? This is just one of those puzzles that call for the exercise of a little cunning in the solving. The inexperienced will spend a lot of time and labour in making the count, while the expert will arrive at the answer in a very few minutes. How is it to be done?

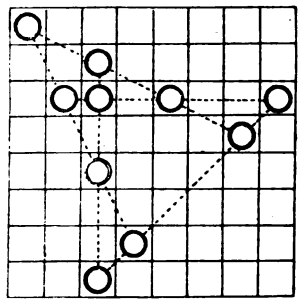


690.—DOLLARS AND CENTS.

AN American correspondent tells me that a man went into a store and spent one half of the money that was in his pocket. When he came out he found that he had just as many cents as he had dollars when he went in and half as many dollars as he had cents when he went in. How much money did he have on him when he entered?

691.—A PUZZLE WITH DRAUGHTS.

IT will be seen in the diagram that I have placed on the board ten draughtsmen so that they form five straight lines with four in every line. Can you form a new arrangement with five lines of four by changing the positions of only six of the men, the remaining four being left where they are at present placed? Of course, the draughts must be placed fairly in the middle of the squares and not on the boundaries.



692.—THREES AND SEVENS.

WHAT is the smallest number composed only of the digits 3 and 7 that may be divided by 3 and by 7, and also the sum of its digits by 3 and by 7, without any remainder. Thus, for example, 7 7 3 3 7 3 3 is divisible by 3 and by 7 without remainder, but the sum of its digits (33), while divisible by 3, is not divisible by 7 without remainder. Therefore it is not a solution.

693.—A WORD SQUARE.

CAREWORN and harassed, and with grief depressed,
To *first* his cares he sought a peaceful *second*,
Where he might *third* his enemies and rest.
But with one foe he had not fully reckoned,
For death to *fourth* him came one night that way,
And he was *fifth* before the dawn of day.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

685.—CHANGING PLACES.

PLAY as follows: 1. Kt—Q B 3, Kt—Q 2; 2. Kt—R 2, Kt—Q B 4; 3. Kt—Kt 4, Kt—K 2; 4. Kt—K B 3, Kt—B 4; 5. B—Q R 3, B—K R 3; 6. Kt—K R 2, Kt—K 5; 7. Kt—Q B 6, B—Q 7; 8. Kt—K Kt 4, Kt—Q B 6; 9. B—K R 3, B—Q R 3; 10. B—K B 8, Kt—Kt 6; 11. Kt—K B 6, B—Q B 8; 12. B—Q 7, B—K B 8; 13. B—B 8, Kt—K 7; 14. Kt—Q Kt 8, Kt—Q Kt 8; 15. Kt—K Kt 8, Kt—K Kt 8. It will be found that the knights alone on the board require ten moves on each side to change places. (A King's Kt cannot change places with a Queen's Kt in four moves without attacking one another.) The bishops, similarly taken alone, need six moves on each side. But, working them together, it is possible to save a move on each side with the bishops by the stratagem, as shown, of screening them with two knights and so enabling one bishop of each colour to make his journey in only two moves, and its opponent in three moves.

686.—PALINDROMIC SENTENCES.

THE letters will form the palindromic sentence, IN A REGAL AGE RAN I, reading backwards and forwards alike.

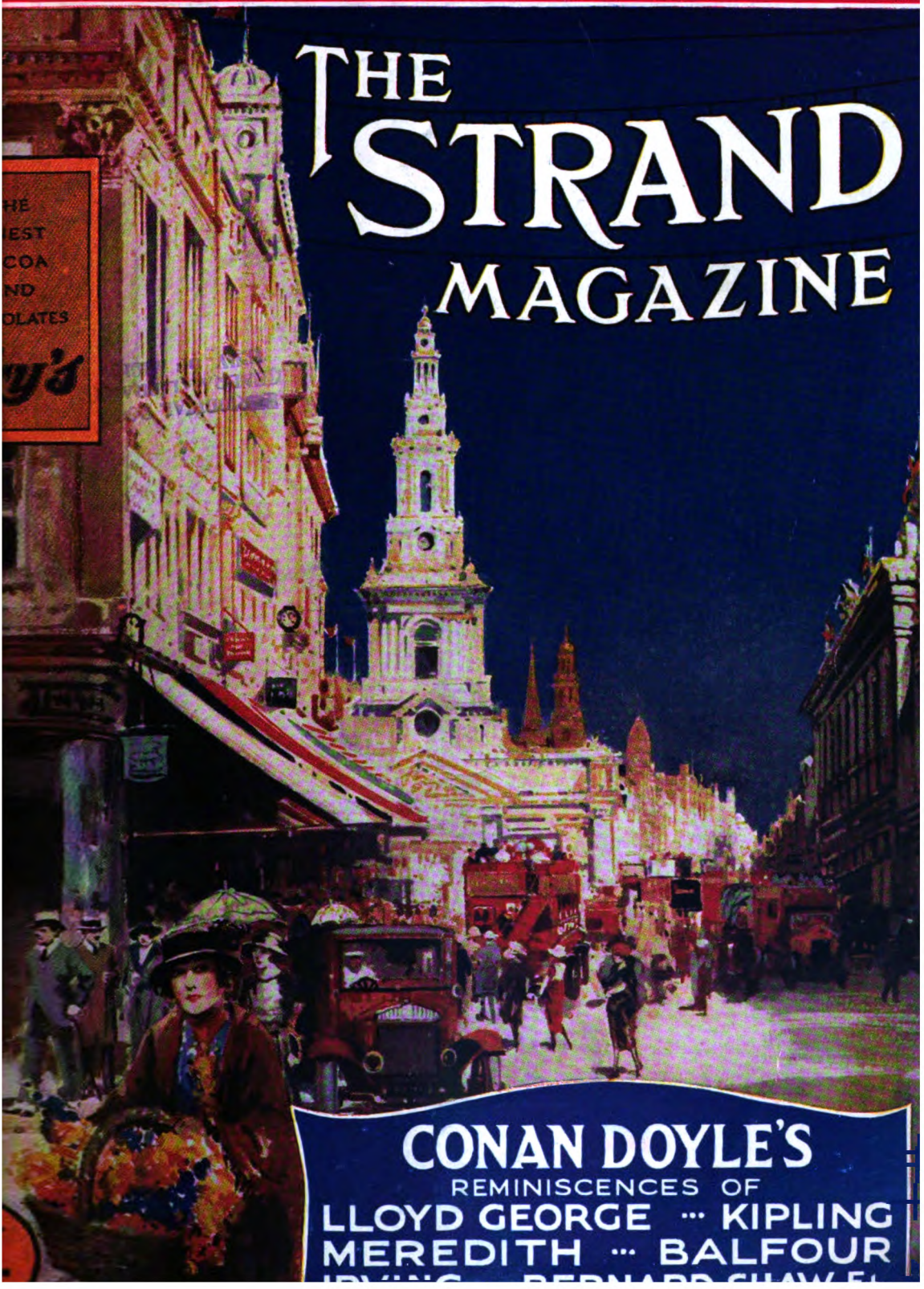
687.—MISSING WORDS.

THE words are SPECTRE, RESPECT, SCEPTRE.

ODEHOUSE · SAPPER · VACHELL

APR 10 1924

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

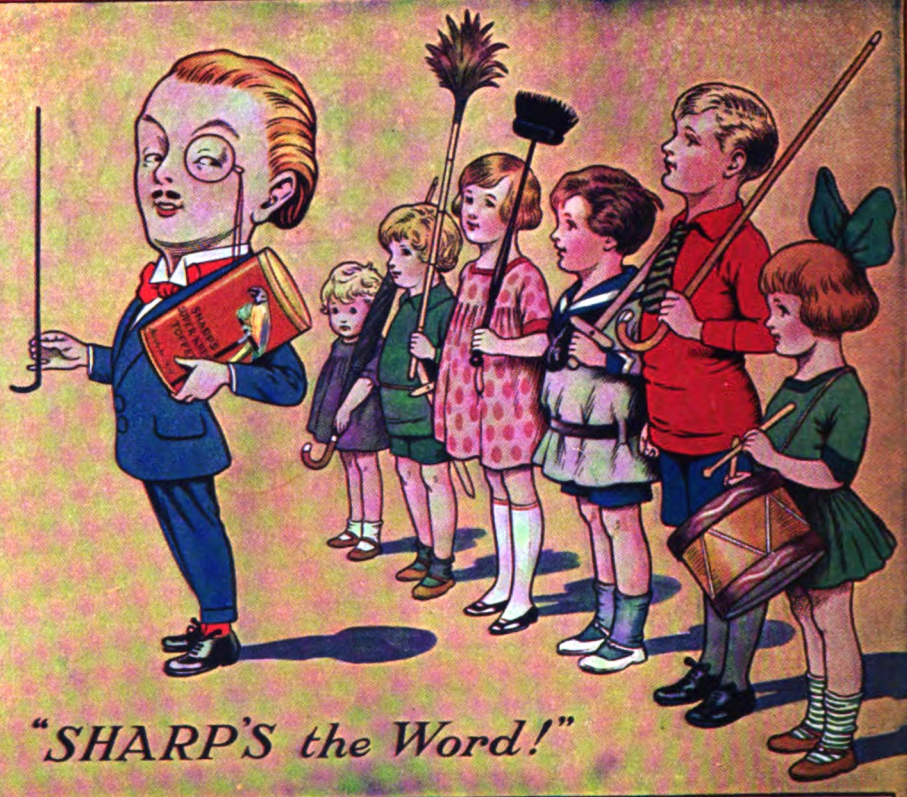


CONAN DOYLE'S

REMINISCENCES OF

LLOYD GEORGE ··· KIPLING

MEREDITH ··· BALFOUR



"SHARP'S the Word!"

Eyes right !
Eyes bright !
Sir Kreemy's on parade.
Sound drums !
Here comes
The finest Toffee made.

All smile !
Best style !
That's the stuff to give 'em.
Good Ma's,
Wise Pa's,
Bring a tin home with 'em.

8d. per ¼ lb.

Sold loose by weight or in 4-lb. decorated tins—also in 1/- and 1/6 tins.

...SHARP'S ASSORTED... SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE which now consists of nine varieties: **Plain, Home-Made, Cocoanut, Chocolate, Coffee, Almond, Brazil, Liqueur, and Mint.**

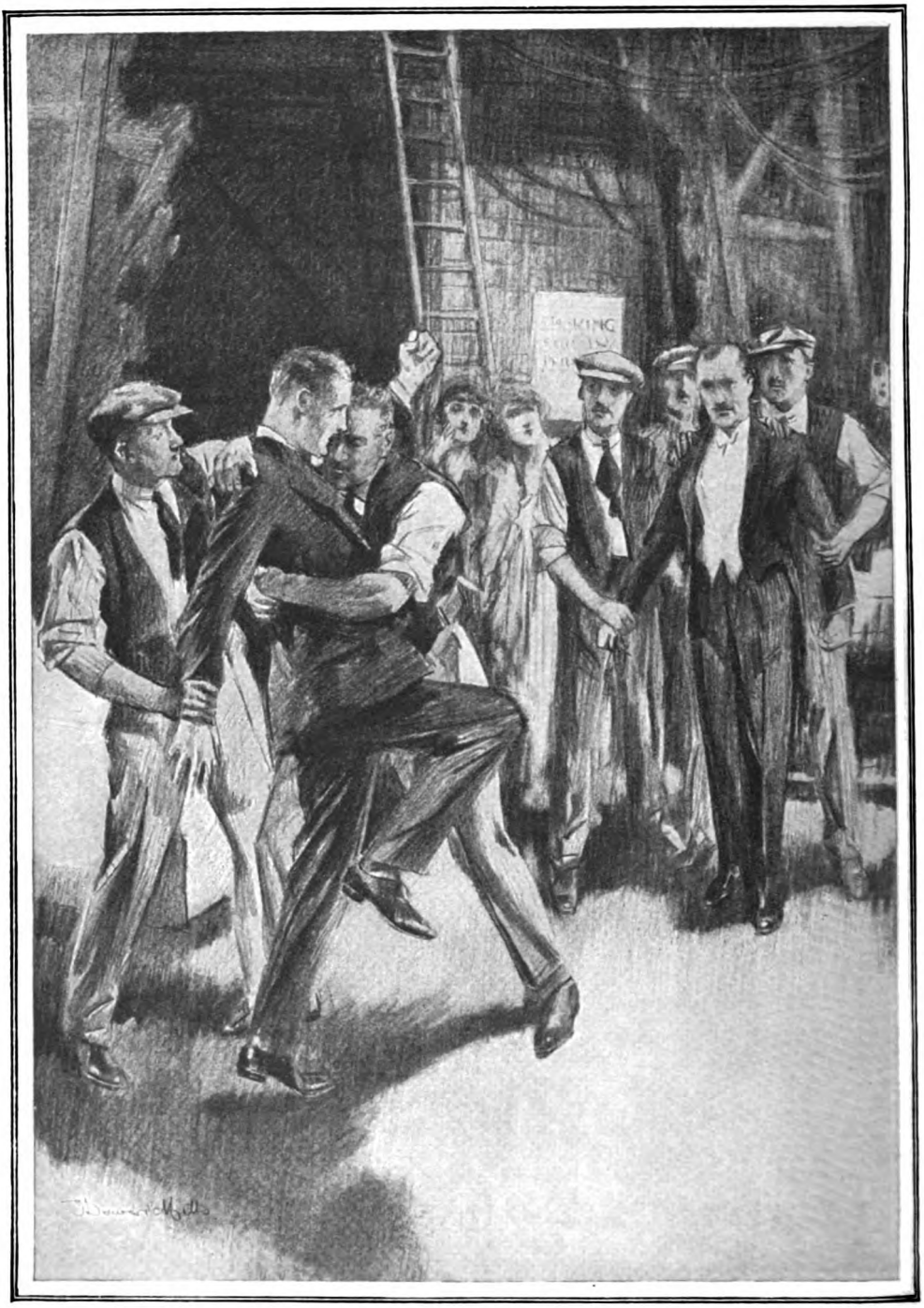
SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE

Look for the words "Sharp's Super-Kreem" on the paper wrapping round every piece.

E. SHARP & SONS, LTD., MAIDSTONE.

S.A.A.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
April, 1924.



THEN I STUMBLED THROUGH THE DOOR TO FIND MERRILL FIGHTING LIKE A MADMAN WITH SOME OF THE STAGE HANDS. HE WAS TRYING TO GET AT A MAN IN EVENING CLOTHES—ALSO IN THE GRIP OF SCENE-SHIFTERS.

(See page 331.)

THE MISSING LINE

by

"SAPPER"
(H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

"MELODRAMA is a loose phrase." The Actor leaned back in his chair and surveyed his guests thoughtfully. "A farce is a farce all the world over: so is a comedy. So, to a lesser extent, perhaps, is tragedy. But melodrama—well, what is melodrama? Understand me. I am not alluding to gorgeously-staged shipwrecks and horse-races at Drury Lane. I want more than that. I want a definition that will include everything that the world calls melodrama."

The Writer splashed some soda-water into his glass.

"Roughly I would give this as a definition," he said. "The presentation of exciting things, which really do not happen in ordinary life, in a sufficiently plausible manner to make them appear convincing. Gentlemen-burglars, revolvers in the drawing-room—all that sort of thing."

"And yet there *are* gentlemen-burglars," retorted his host. "And a few weeks ago in the papers was the picture of two men lying dead in a street in New York: they had killed one another with revolvers. Because no one has ever flourished a pistol under my nose, does that make a gun-man melodramatic?"

"He might very reasonably be a melodramatic figure on the stage," argued the Doctor.

"Not in a country where gun-men are common," cried the Actor. "The standard must vary. Melodrama in London may be the most natural thing in the world in Italy. And I go further——" He paused and looked at the Writer. "Things that don't happen: that is your criterion, is it? Very well; I will meet you on your own ground. And when I've told you the story of the thing which happened to me—good Lord, it's twenty odd years ago now!—you shall tell me whether you still hold to that definition or not."

With some deliberation he lit a cigar, while the other men settled themselves comfortably in their chairs to listen. The dinner had been perfect; the Actor's cigars were beyond reproach. Moreover, the Actor's powers as a raconteur were well known.

"I don't know where you all were at the time," he began, when his cigar was drawing to his satisfaction. "You, Dick, were still in South Africa"—the Soldier nodded—"and Tom was in some God-forsaken place."

"I was studying leprosy from '01 to '04 in the South Seas," said the Doctor.

The Actor continued:

ANYWAY, it doesn't much matter. Those of you who were at home have probably completely forgotten the affair. It didn't make much of a sensation even at the time; and I don't suppose there are half-a-dozen people, outside those who were actually in the theatre when it occurred, who would remember anything about it to-day.

I had been in management rather over a year, and, fortunately for me, very successfully. My first play had run for six months; my second was still playing to good business. But it had reached that point when I realized that definite steps would have to be taken with regard to its successor. I had two or three possibles in my mind, and I was glancing through them one

Copyright, 1924, by H. C. McNeile.

morning to make my final choice, when the telephone rang in my room.

It was Hastings, the well-known literary agent, and he asked me if I could make it convenient to go round and see him without delay. He had a play which he thought might interest me, and he wanted to talk to me about it.

As you probably know, there are agents and agents. But when a man like Hastings, who is quite at the top of the tree, rings you up on a matter of that sort it doesn't do to disregard it. So I went round to see him that morning.

" I telephoned you," he said, as soon as I was seated in his office, " because there are circumstances about the case which are a little unusual. There's the play "—he pushed it across his desk—" and I can tell you the circumstances better than I can write them."

" Before we come to that," I interrupted, " have you read the play ? "

" I have," he answered.

" Is it good ? "

" Personally I think it is very good—very good indeed. In fact, I may say that it is the best play I have had through my hands for years." And then, with an enigmatic smile, he added : " As far as it goes."

I stared at him.

" What on earth do you mean ? " I said. " Isn't it finished ? "

" No—it isn't. The curtain of the last act has been deliberately omitted. But I have it on the author's own word that it is written."

" But what the deuce has he done that for ? " I said, blankly. " By the way, who is the author ? "

I glanced at the script. John Strangeways—a name I'd never heard of.

" That is a pseudonym," said Hastings.

" Do you know who he is ? " I demanded.

" I've met him—if that's what you mean. He has been in this office ; he has sat in the chair you are sitting in. But beyond that I can't say I know him." He leaned forward across the desk. " I'd better come down to the circumstances I spoke of—or rather the conditions. I may say that they are a little peculiar. In the first place—and this, I think you will agree, is very peculiar—he wants no royalties."

" What an eminently satisfactory man ! " I murmured.

" He is, I gather, very wealthy," went on Hastings, " and he is prepared to pay for his caprices. Not only does he require no royalties, but he is prepared to finance the play."

I stared at him even harder.

" That means one of two things," I remarked. " Either the play is no good or the man is a little wanting."

Hastings smiled slightly.

" Neither, I think. There is a third reason—in this case I have no doubt the true one. *Cherchez la femme.* He makes it an absolute condition that Paula Vendon should play the part of the heroine."

" Paula Vendon," I said. " I've heard of her, but—what's she doing now ? "

I *had* heard of her, in the way one hears of a lot of people on the stage with whom one never comes in contact. Certainly she had never done anything big.

" At the present moment she is playing a small part at the Haymarket," said Hastings.

" Can she act ? " I asked.

" To tell you the truth, I really don't know," he answered.

" I thought there was a catch somewhere," I said, fingering the script. " Let's have the other conditions."

" The second of them is similar. A man called Leslie Merrill is to play the part of her lover."

" And what the devil am I to do ? " I exclaimed. " The butler——"

Hastings smiled.

" It will be clearer when you've read the script," he answered. " You are to play the husband, which is the biggest part in the cast."

" I've heard often of men financing a play for a woman," I said, " but it's the first occasion to my knowledge when a man has been included. What sort of a fellow is this John Strangeways ? "

" He struck me as a hard-headed business man," answered Hastings. " There is a trace of something Southern in him, though not marked, and his real name is as Anglo-Saxon as his *nom de plume*. Moreover, I should think he's got the devil of a temper when roused. However, there are one or two other conditions which I'd better tell you. In no circumstances is either Miss Vendon or this man Merrill to be told that it was at the author's wish that they were given these two parts. It must come direct from you, as if it was your original idea. And, finally, the finish of the last act will not be given to you until the evening of the first night."

" But that's preposterous," I said, a little angrily. " The finish of the last act must be rehearsed the same as everything else."

" The very thing I pointed out to him," remarked Hastings, lighting a cigarette. " But I am bound to say that he had a very good reason—or, at any rate, as good a reason as one could expect. He tells me that the play is complete—save for one line : a line to be spoken by you. Since the tag

is never spoken during rehearsal—he is quite well up in theatrical customs—he argues that that one line is not wanted till the first night. I have, as I told you, read the play myself, and he's quite right. The play is finished—but for a line, and a little action. Anyway, it's an unalterable condition."

" Hang it all, Hastings," I said, irritably, " the whole thing strikes me as being the most extraordinary thing I've ever heard of. You're sure the man is quite sane ? "

" As sane as you or I. Undoubtedly he is eccentric, but he struck me as a gentleman who can afford to pay for his eccentricity. Candidly, Trayne, I felt just the same as you do about it. At first I was inclined to wash my hands of the whole affair. And then, out of curiosity, I read the play. Well, all I can say is, before you decide anything further, read it yourself."

Whereupon, he handed me the manuscript.

" All right, I will. When am I to meet this strange individual ? "

" A condition I was almost forgetting. You will not meet him. Should there be any point which you wish to discuss with him, he would like you to do it through me. In any question of finance I am to act for him. And he particularly desires that no effort should be made to discover his identity."

" Well, I'm damned ! " I muttered. " However, I'll read it, and I'll let you know my decision as soon as possible."

With that I shook hands and left him with the play under my arm. To say that I was intrigued would be to express my feelings too lightly : I was downright curious. Any possibility of the thing being some elaborate hoax

" Hang it all, Hastings," I said, irritably, " the whole thing strikes me as being the most extraordinary thing I've ever heard of. You're sure the man is quite sane ? "

was ruled out of court by the fact that it was Hastings who was handling it. He was far too big a man to lend himself to any foolish tricks of that sort.

All through lunch at my club I tried to puzzle things out, but I couldn't see a ray of light. And it was only as I was starting to walk home that I suddenly remembered there was an extra *matinée* at the Haymarket that afternoon—my only chance of seeing the unknown's two *protégés* act. It had got as far as that in my mind.

Well, I watched them from the stalls. The girl had a small part which she filled perfectly capably; so had the man. There was nothing to signal either of them out in any way, with the possible exception of the girl's looks. She really was astoundingly pretty, with that wonderful English colouring which is unfortunately getting rarer and rarer. But you want something more than wonderful English colouring when you're going to play lead. And I saw nothing that afternoon to lead me to suppose that she had it. Of course, it might be there, lying dormant, ready to come out on a big occasion. On the other hand, it might not. At any rate, I'd seen them; now to read the play.

I HAD no time that evening before I went down to the theatre, and all through my own show my mind was subconsciously dwelling on the affair. It all seemed so strange, so unaccountable. Some kindly man wishing to do these two a good turn, perhaps, and remain unknown. But why the mystery of the missing line? Why no royalties? Why a hundred things?

At any rate, I was so intrigued that any thought of bed was out of the question until I'd read it. I started at midnight, and an hour later I sat back in my chair if anything more perplexed than ever. In spite of what Hastings had told me, I hadn't been able to rid my mind of the thought that the real reason of the mystery was that the play was bad, and the unknown author was trying to buy me. But as I put the script down I knew that Hastings was right. It was good: thundering good. I don't say that it was a masterpiece, but it was a play which anyone would have thankfully accepted on the spot and asked for more of the same kind. It was dramatic, it was tense, and it had plenty of action. I don't propose to tell you all the plot; it would only bore you. But to make what follows clear I must give you a brief outline of the end of the play—the bit that led up to the missing line. The situation was that the lady's husband, and the man whom the husband had strongly suspected of being on rather more than mere calling terms with his wife, occupied the stage. The real bone of contention, led up to in two acts of good gripping stuff, had occurred the previous night at the end of the second act. It presupposed one of those admirable stage houses which, thank heavens! are beyond the worst nightmare of even a modern jerry-builder—the type of bungalow effect where the bedrooms lead out of the hall. Behold, then, at the finish of the second act, husband returning somewhat unexpectedly to discover wife's bedroom door locked. And coming from the room a man's voice. Now all that was well done. The audience didn't know who was in there. They had seen the lover depart earlier, after scene of renunciation: they had seen the wife go to her bedroom. They had seen her pause in the doorway, stagger a little, and gasp out, "My God! You!" Then she had disappeared. Who was it in the room? Had the lover returned through the window? Was he a dirty dog, after all?

Then husband arrives: hears voice: beats on door. After a perceptible pause the door opens and wife appears. The room is empty; the man, whoever it was, has escaped through the window. Husband accuses her point-blank: mentions the lover by name. Horror upon horror—she does not deny it. Let him think what he will. In fact, not only does she not deny it, she admits it. And then she sinks half fainting on the floor, while husband, uttering hoarse noises, beats it rapidly for the garden and a little fresh air.

Such was the situation which had to be cleared up in the third act. But before I come to that I must mention one more character—the lady's younger brother. He hadn't come in much, though he had been seen, and his principal claim to notoriety lay in the fact that he had spent quite a considerable portion of his life at His Majesty's expense. It is also gathered that he had just laid himself open to a further sojourn in the same quarters. An undesirable fellow, but adored—as undesirable fellows so often are—by his sister.

You've guessed, of course. He was to be the saviour of the situation. He it was whose voice the husband had heard the preceding night.

"You're a stern man; you're a harsh man," says the lover. "You take no excuse for weakness. It is a fact that I love your wife; but never by word or deed has she been disloyal to you. She was frightened to tell you last night who was in her room. She thought you'd ring for the police. It was her brother who was with her: if you want proof—open that door. She lied to save him."

He stood there pointing at the door, and

there the script ended. There was one line more: what was it? What was that line—and what was on the other side of the door?

Lord! you fellows, how I cursed that unknown playwright! What was this line locked up in his mind? I couldn't get away from it. It haunted me. I could think of half-a-dozen, but none of them was good. Not a single line that I could think of kept up the tension till the curtain dropped. Was it to be a question of "My dear, forgive me, and my unworthy doubts," while the lover steals gently away to the Colonies? Were we to find the brother manacled between large policemen, as a sort of *tableau vivant?* Horrible. The bare thought of it made me shudder.

However, on one point I'd made up my mind. Missing line or no missing line, I was going to do that play next. If the worst came to the worst, and the curtain proved a bad one, I had sufficient faith in myself to think that I could substitute something or other which would prove satisfactory. After all, I had two months at least. And, furthermore, I thought it not unlikely that through Hastings I might be able to persuade the author to waive this particular condition a little nearer the time. There was no hurry about it at the moment.

Accordingly, next day I again went round to see Hastings. He smiled as I entered his office and said: "I thought you would."

"Would what?" I demanded.

"Take the play. I've got the agreement all ready for you to sign."

I read it through, and, assuredly, it was a strange document. No mention of royalties or American rights or anything of that sort. Everything was mine unconditionally, or rather I should say everything was mine subject to the author's reservations, which I had already heard. But these were emphasized in no uncertain way.

"Should the licensee," ran a clause, "break the above conditions either in letter or in spirit, the agreement shall terminate forthwith. The author or his agent shall be sole arbiters of such infringement."

I kicked at that: it seemed to put me too completely in his hands. But, as Hastings pointed out, a further clause indemnifying me against any financial loss in such an event was a very efficient safeguard.

At any rate, I signed. Not without some misgivings at the last moment, it's true; but I signed. And there I was definitely committed to the production of an unfinished play by an unknown author, with two practically unknown people in two of the principal parts.

THE first thing was to get hold of them. The run at the Haymarket was almost over, so I knew they would be free when I wanted them. And I asked them both to come round to see me at my theatre one evening after a *matinée*. They came, obviously a little surprised, and when I told them what I wanted their surprise did not decrease. To play lead with me—well, I don't want to appear unduly conceited—was an immense leg-up for both of them.

"I saw you at the Haymarket," I said, "and it struck me, from every point of view, that you are just what I want in this new play."

She looked at him, and she was even prettier close to than on the stage. And he looked at her, while I looked at them both. Accept—of course they would: with fervent gratitude and joy. And even while they were stammering out their thanks, I realized one thing. Paula Vendon and Merrill were in love with one another.

It threw a light on the situation: it gave a possible solution. The unknown author was a philanthropist anxious to help these two to get married. And they'd have made a deuced fine couple, for he was a good-looking fellow, was Merrill.

Of course, as a solution it didn't explain the extraordinary condition as to the missing line, but at any rate it explained the others. And for two or three weeks I let it go at that. I got the cast together, and having completed the other preliminaries, we went into rehearsal.

First I read them the play. It's strange, isn't it, when one looks back on things by the light of future events, how a man marvels at his blindness? And yet when I came to the end of the second act—the bedroom scene I have told you of—and Paula Vendon, white to the lips, stood up with a stifled scream, nothing untoward struck me. In fact, so incredible can the density of the human brain be, that I thought her agitation was due to my masterly reading. I had carried her away, and if that was so she might really prove an actress.

She said nothing, and after a moment or two she resumed her chair with a little apology. But all through the third act I felt her great eyes fixed on me with an almost uncanny stare, and once, when I glanced at Merrill, he, too, was looking at me with a strange intentness.

I laid down the script and an excited chorus assailed me. "What then? What's the end?"

"Ah, ha!" I laughed, "I'm not going to tell you that. That's the tag—and that's a mystery."

They loved that, of course. We're all of

us children; stage people more so than most. And soon the stage was empty save for Paula Vendon and Merrill. I'd noticed them talking earnestly in a corner, and when the others had gone they came up to me.

"Mr. Trayne," said the girl, quietly, "who wrote this play?"

"A man who calls himself John Strangeways," I answered.

"That isn't his real name?" she asked.

"No. And I don't know what his real name is."

And then she looked at me as if she would read my very soul.

"Mr. Trayne," she said, "you've got to tell us. What is that missing line? What lies behind that door?"

Instinctively her hand went out to Merrill, and he took it in his own quite naturally.

"My dear," I answered, quietly, "you may believe me or not, as you like—but I don't know myself. It is a whim of the author's that that should be kept a secret even from me until—er—until later on."

I think she saw I was speaking the truth, and she turned with a little shiver to Merrill.

"Leslie—I'm frightened. The whole thing is uncanny."

"My dear child——" I began, but Merrill interrupted me.

"Don't think, Mr. Trayne, that it's fanciful imagination. The fact is——"—he hesitated a moment before taking the plunge—"the fact is that the play bears the most astounding resemblance to what actually happened to a—to a very dear friend of Miss Vendon."

"My dear fellow," I said, "is there anything unique in that? Most plays, certainly most good plays, must bear a resemblance to what has actually happened to someone. Otherwise they wouldn't be good. And the fact that this bears a resemblance to what happened to a friend of Miss Vendon strikes me as being merely a coincidence."

"That's so," he muttered, but I could see he wasn't convinced. Nor was she. Great heavens! in the light of future events I don't wonder. But who in their wildest imagination could have possibly anticipated those events? Certainly not I, for one.

THE next day we went into rehearsal in earnest. Whatever misgivings Paula Vendon may have felt, she gave no further sign of them. She was ambitious—intensely so: and, what was more to the point, I soon saw that she was a fine actress. Merrill, too, was excellent: in fact, everything was going swimmingly. The only fly in my ointment was the absolute refusal on the part of the author to reconsider his condition as to the missing line. I told Hastings that I would swear on my most sacred word of honour not to let another soul know what it was, if only he would tell me. And I was met with an absolutely blank refusal. On the first night, and not till then, would the secret be revealed.

Of course, it was impossible to stop the company from talking. And after a week or two the reporters got to hear of it. This was something new: a first-class stunt. They lay in wait for me: they besieged my dressing-room, and I had to say something. And then paragraphs began to appear something after this fashion:—

"Accustomed though we all of us are to the secrecy surrounding forthcoming theatrical productions, Mr. Arthur Trayne has gone a step farther. He assures us that he himself is in complete ignorance of the final curtain of his new play. He tells us, however," etc., etc.

Then there were headlines in the weekly sporting papers:—

"What Lies Behind the Closed Door?

"What is the Missing Line?"

So it went on: a truly gorgeous advertisement. Never has there been such an advertisement before or since. Everybody was talking about it. Men at the club gnashed their teeth with envy: asked me if it was my idea. And quite politely, but very definitely, they flatly refused to believe me when I said it was the truth. The company didn't believe me—and after a time I let it go at that. Advertisement is an excellent thing—and since the world had taken it that way, let it remain so.

And then one day dear old Jimmy Saunders gave me a bit of a jolt. We were lunching together, and, as usual, the conversation came round to the play.

"You really mean, Arthur," he said, "that you have no idea of this curtain?"

"Jimmy," I answered, "there are some men I don't lie to, and you're one of 'em. I haven't the ghost of a notion."

For a moment or two he crumbled his bread, while he stared at me from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"Then all I can say, old man," he said, at length, "is that I hope you won't be let down. If, after all this talking and mystery, the mountain brings forth a mouse, it won't do you any good. And, I tell you, it will have to be something astonishingly big to survive this prolonged period of gestation."

I stared at him.

"By Jove! Jimmy, you're right," I said. "It hadn't struck me that way before. But it wasn't I who started this damned advertisement."

He laughed.

"Mr. Trayne," she said, "you've got to tell us. What is that missing line? What lies behind that door?"

"I dare say not. But most of your friends and all your enemies will think it was."

As I said, it hadn't struck me in that light before. To have a thumping advertisement and then present the public with a thing like a damp squib is not a good thing to do. And I was under no delusions on one point. All the tentative endings which had occurred to me would produce exactly that effect. When I had thought of them vaguely at the beginning, there had been no question of this newspaper stunt. Any of them would have done at a pinch—then: now the thing was completely different. And the more I thought of it, the less I liked it. I used to have nightmares of the door opening slowly before the excited audience to reveal Miss Vendon standing on her head. And then I'd wake in a muck sweat with the jeers and hisses of the whole theatre ringing in my ears.

I redoubled my efforts through Hastings.

"Point out to the author," I said, "the position we're in. He may be eccentric; but he must want his play to succeed. And if, after this advertisement, that final curtain is a frost, the whole thing will be a hopeless failure."

It was useless. Hastings fully saw my point, and did everything he possibly could.

"You can assure Mr. Trayne," was the only answer, "that the more advertisement there is the better I shall be pleased. The final curtain will not be a frost, but will be the strongest point in the play."

And with that I had to rest content. Once or twice I seriously thought of chucking up the whole thing—but I couldn't. I was too involved: things had gone too far. There was nothing for it but to carry on and trust for the best.

THE date for production drew nearer and nearer, and but for that one haunting fear I should have been delighted. I knew I had a winner. The company were splendid: Paula had fairly astounded me. Whatever the cause of her first vague fears, she had apparently completely got over them, and she was superb. In her I saw my future leading lady for as long as she liked, and I told her so. She was delighted, and I watched her passing it on to Merrill in a corner of the stage. And then he said something to her and touched her hand—and they laughed a little as lovers do. A good pair; there would always be a place in the cast for Merrill as well.

It was two days before the dress rehearsal that Hastings came round to see me.

"About that bally door of yours," he began.

"He's told you!" I cried, excitedly.

"Not a word," he answered, and my heart sank. "But he wants that door boxed in so that the stage hands can't see. In fact, he wants a little room made behind the stage set, out of which that door will open."

I stared at him in amazement: the wildest thoughts were passing through my mind. You fellows probably have no idea of the astounding things which some people will submit for staging; I had.

"Good Lord, Hastings!" I said, anxiously, "what's the game? Surely he hasn't got some French cabaret ending with Paula waiting for me in a minimum of clothes—or anything of that sort! Because if that's it," I added, firmly, "I'll postpone the play. I won't do it; and people can think what they like."

Hastings hurried off, and half an hour later he rang me up.

"It's all right, Trayne," he said. "It's nothing indecent. But he wants Miss Vendon to be in that room three minutes before the end of the play. She is to be dressed in the evening frock she is wearing earlier in the act."

So I sent for the stage carpenter and gave him the necessary instructions. God! what a fool I was! As I said before, a man's blindness can be incredible. Yet who would have thought—who *could* have thought?

The dress rehearsal went without a hitch. A few specially invited people waxed enthusiastic, though one or two of them were mildly sarcastic. The line, you see, was still missing.

"So you won't even trust *us*?" said one of them to me after. "It must be the devil of an ending, old man."

And when I told him I didn't know it myself, he smiled politely.

I don't think I've ever spent a more nerve-racking day than the next. Most of the morning papers had allusions to it—and all the evening ones: "Mystery of the Closed Door to be Solved To-night."

The demand for seats had been unprecedented; as you know, a first-night is generally a largely paper house, but there was less paper on this occasion than on any other in my career. Six o'clock came; seven—and I was getting in a fever. No inkling of what the curtain was to be had come.

Hastings rang me up, and I could tell he was uneasy himself; he'd heard nothing. And I cursed him foolishly over the wire.

I went down to the theatre, where the usual first-night fever was in evidence. And there I found Hastings looking very worried.

"Look here, Trayne," he said, "I'm sorry to say I've got bad news for you."

I stood very still.

"You mean the curtain is hopeless?" I said.

"Not quite as bad as that. But the author now states that he will not reveal the curtain until the moment comes. He wishes you to stand facing the door: Merrill with his back to it."

"But," I almost screamed, "what am I to say?"

"He says you'll know at the time. Above all things you're not to worry. He is mad keen on a success. I think," he added, in a pitiful attempt to cheer me up, "you can trust him. I have a feeling he's not going to let you down. He's not that type of man."

I nodded dully; was ever a man in such a position? A crammed, excited audience; all this damnable advertisement—and I didn't know the answer.

"If that man does let me down, Hastings," I said, savagely, "I swear to Heaven I'll never forgive you."

But he was a good fellow and took no offence.

Of course, I didn't let the company know; that would have been fatal. And they played superbly. I forced that ghastly final tence out of mind as much as I could, and did my best; but at the end of the first act I heard a man's voice from the stalls: "The girl's magnificent, but Trayne's a bit mechanical for him."

Do you wonder?

The second act was a triumph. We had fifteen curtains—Paula and I, and the girl's eyes were all dewy with happiness and success.

Then came the third. Lord! you fellows, I could feel the tension on the other side of the house; now the secret which had set London talking was to be revealed. I played in a sort of daze, and every moment it got nearer—the still-missing line. Two minutes to go; Paula was there now—behind the door. And then began Merrill's last speech:—

"You're a stern man; you're a harsh man."

I was staring at the door; and suddenly my heart began to beat in great sickening thumps. Dimly I heard Merrill's voice; but the stage was swimming. No—not nervousness: horror. Stark, unbelievable horror. From underneath the door a stream was trickling. And the stream was scarlet. It oozed gently on till it came to the carpet; and then more came and more. It took fantastic shapes; it went with little rushes—then it stopped. Then on again. It was blood.

"If you want proof—open that door. She lied to save him."

From a vast distance I heard his voice. And then the door opened. The audience, I was told afterwards, were literally rising in their seats; the moment had come. And to my dying day I shall never forget the terror of it. It swung open—that door; and with it came Paula. A dagger had been plunged up to the hilt in her heart, and she lay there on the stage with a look of pitiful fear in her eyes—eyes already glazed and sightless.

And then came a voice, a harsh, terrible voice.

"Her brother was arrested by the police three days ago."

The missing line was known at last.

THE next few minutes are just a blur in my mind. Someone lowered the curtain, and wave after wave of applause came from the other side. And still I stood there speechless. Up it went again; no one had seen anything in the wings, while all the time the stream grew larger and larger.

And then came the climax: Merrill had swung round and seen it too. Clear above the applause came his agonized shout, and as he knelt down beside the girl a dead silence fell. He lifted her in his arms, and as he did so the great red stain showed clear to the people in the dress-circle.

A woman screamed, and at last I found my voice.

"Lower the curtain!" I shouted. And as it went down I called across the footlights: "A doctor, if there is one—at once!"

Then I stumbled through the door—that cursed door—to find Merrill fighting like a madman with some of the stage hands. He was trying to get at a man in evening clothes who was facing him—also in the grip of scene-shifters.

"'Ere's the swine wot did it, sir," said one of them as he saw me.

"A capital performance, Mr. Trayne," said the stranger, politely. "My dear wife scored a veritable triumph."

"Good God, man!" said a voice beside me. "That's the author."

It was Hastings, and his face was as white as his shirt front.

THERE isn't much more to tell. Recognizing the man as Paula Vendon's husband, the doorkeeper had let him pass—and it was a stage-hand up above who told me what had happened. He'd seen it all, for there was no roof on the room behind the door. Paula was standing there when he came in, and she shrank back in evident surprise at his sudden appearance. And

then, before the horrified gaze of the man, who was powerless to interfere, the devil had whipped out a dagger and stabbed her. He placed her sitting against the door, and held her there till the moment came—and the door opened.

But it was Merrill himself who supplied the missing links.

"It was my fault," he muttered, brokenly. "I over-persuaded her. I forced myself to think it was only a strange coincidence—and I made her think it, too. Besides, I never dreamed, I never thought—— Who could have? You see, it was true—this play." He looked at me with sombre eyes. "It happened—all except the finish." For a while he broke down utterly. "It was true that her brother had been taken by the police three days before he caught us, but until to-night I never realized he

knew. And there was nothing wrong, Trayne, that I swear. I was in her room, but it was only to make one more attempt to get her to leave what was nothing more than a hell on earth and come away with me. But that brute would never have believed it, so I lied to him. And so did she. We said it was her brother, and he pretended to believe. And he knew all the time. For three years has that devil kept it dark, waiting for his revenge. And now—oh, my little girl, my little girl!"

And then began Merrill's last speech: "You're a stern man; you're a harsh man." I was staring at the door; and suddenly my heart began to beat in great sickening thumps.

He staggered blindly from my dressing-room, and I sat on, thinking dully. Reporters were seething outside, but I refused to see them. I felt that I was to blame, and yet, as poor Merrill said, who could have dreamed of such an end? Step by step that devil had led up to it—and then, in the hour of her triumph, he killed her. They found him mad: as far as I know, he's in Broadmoor to-day.

But—and this is the point—assuming that ending, without the actual tragedy, would you have called that play melodrama?

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER XIV.

Some Notable People.

D. LLOYD GEORGE. H. H. ASQUITH. RUDYARD KIPLING.
THEODORE ROOSEVELT. LORD HALDANE. SIR HENRY IRVING.
LORD BALFOUR. GEORGE MEREDITH. BERNARD SHAW, etc.

WHEN I have chanced during my life to come in contact with notable people, I have often made some short record afterwards of what they said and how they impressed me. It is difficult, however, to use these notes for publication when you happen to have been a guest, and it can only be done, I think, by using one's judgment and never consciously harming one's host. If everyone were altogether silent upon such occasions the most pleasing side of great contemporaries would never be chronicled, for the statesman in slippers is a very much more human and lovable person than the politician on the platform.

Which leads up to the fact that I find in my diary that Mr. Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, invited me to breakfast in April, 1917. Some third person was, I understand, to have been present, but he did not arrive, so that I found myself alone in the classic dining-room of No. 10, Downing Street, while my host was finishing his toilet. Presently he appeared, clad in a grey suit, smart and smiling, with no sign at all that he bore the weight of the great European War upon his shoulders. Nothing could have been more affable or democratic, for there was no servant present, and he poured out the tea while I, from a side table, brought the bacon and eggs for both. He had certainly the Celtic power of making one absolutely at one's ease, for there was no trace at all of pomp or ceremony — just a pleasant, smiling, grey-haired but very virile gentleman, with twinkling eyes and a roguish smile. No doubt there are other aspects, but that is how he presented himself that morning.

He began by talking about the great loss which the country had sustained in Lord Kitchener's death, speaking of him in a very kindly and human way. At the same time he was of opinion that long tropical service and the habit of always talking down to subordinates had had some effect upon his mind and character. He was a strange mixture of rather morose inactivity and sudden flashes of prevision which amounted

Copyright, 1924, by A. Conan Doyle.

to genius. He was the only man who had clearly foreseen the length of the war, and but for Turkey, Bulgaria, and other complications he probably overstated it at three years. There were times when he became so dictatorial as to be almost unbearable, and he had to be reminded at a Cabinet Council by Mr. Lloyd George himself that he was in the presence of twenty men who were his peers and that he could not refuse them information or act above their heads. I confess that it struck me as very natural that a big man with vital knowledge in his brain should hesitate in a world crisis to confide it to twenty men, and probably twenty wives, each of whom was a possible leak.

In spite of his genius Kitchener was not accessible to new ideas. He could not see clearly why such enormous munitions were necessary. He opposed tanks. He was against the Irish and Welsh separate divisions. He refused the special flags which the ladies had worked for these divisions. He was as remote from sentiment as a steam-hammer, and yet he was dealing with humans who can be influenced by sentiment. He obstructed in many things, particularly in the Dardanelles. On the other hand, his steps in organizing the new armies were splendid, though he had attempted—vainly—to do away with the Territorials—another example of his blindness to the practical force of sentiment. A witty lady had said of him: "If he is not a great man, he is a great poster," and certainly no one else could have moved the nation to such a degree, though the long series of provocations from the Germans had made us very receptive and combative.

Lloyd George was justly proud of the splendid work of the Welsh division at the Front. He had been to Mametz Wood, the taking of which had been such a bloody and also such a glorious business. He listened with interest to an account which I was able to give him of some incidents in that fight, and said that it was a beautiful story. He had arranged for a Welsh painter to do the scene of the battle.

Mr. Lloyd George poured out the tea while I brought the bacon and eggs for both.

He was interested to hear how I had worked upon my history, and remarked that it was probably better done from direct human documents than from filed papers. He asked me whether I had met many of the divisional Generals, and on my saying that I had he asked me if any had struck me as outstanding among their fellows. I said I thought they were a fine level lot, but that in soldiering it was impossible to say by mere talk or appearance who was the big man at a pinch. He agreed. He seemed to have a particular feeling towards General Tom Bridges, of the 19th Division, and shortly afterwards I noticed that he was chosen for the American mission.

I talked to him about my views as to the use of armour and

found him very keen upon it. He is an excellent listener and seems honestly interested in what you say. He said that he had no doubt that in the problem of armour lay the future of warfare, but how to carry it was the crux. He said that the soldiers always obstructed the idea—which was my experience also—with a few notable exceptions. I mentioned General Watts of the 7th Division as being interested in armour, and he agreed and seemed to know all about Watts, who, though a "dug-out," was one of the finds of the war.

He was much excited about the revolution in Russia, news of which had only just come through. The Guards had turned, and that meant that all had turned. The Czar was good but weak. The general character and probable fate of the Czarina were not unlike those of Marie Antoinette—in fact, the whole course of events was very analogous to the French Revolution. "Then it will last some years and end in a Napoleon," said I. He agreed. The revolt, he said, was in no sense pro-German. The whole affair had been Byzantine and reminded one of the old histories.

As I left he came back to armour, and said that he was about to see someone on that very subject. When I was in the hall it struck me that a few definite facts which I had in my head would be useful in such an interview, so, to the surprise of the butler, I sat down on the hall chair and wrote out on a scrap of paper a few headings which I asked him to give the Prime Minister. I don't know if they were of any use. I came away reassured, and feeling that a vigorous virile hand was at the helm.

I had no further personal touch with him until July 27th, 1922, when I met him at a small men's dinner party, where you get real talk, which for some reason is impossible where the sexes are mixed. He was very picturesque in his description of the heads of every State, large and small, of the British Empire, sitting round one table at Versailles—no outsiders admitted—to discuss their views of how Germany should be treated. Lloyd George said nothing, but listened and admired their restraint and wisdom. The whole question was viewed without rancour and as a business proposition. They were unanimous in their conclusions. Afterwards the French presented a fantastic programme of revenge, to which Lloyd George said, "Very good. That is your affair. But once for all the British Empire does not sign such a treaty." We could have imposed absolute moderation, but unhappily Wilson's nerves suddenly broke down under the attacks of the very unscrupulous French Press, and he threw in the weight of America for a compromise which has been the cause of all the difficulties since. Gradually the pressure of events has partly brought the world round to the views and plans of the British, but the world has had to suffer in order to learn its lesson. It was fierce old Clemenceau who was the root of all the mischief.

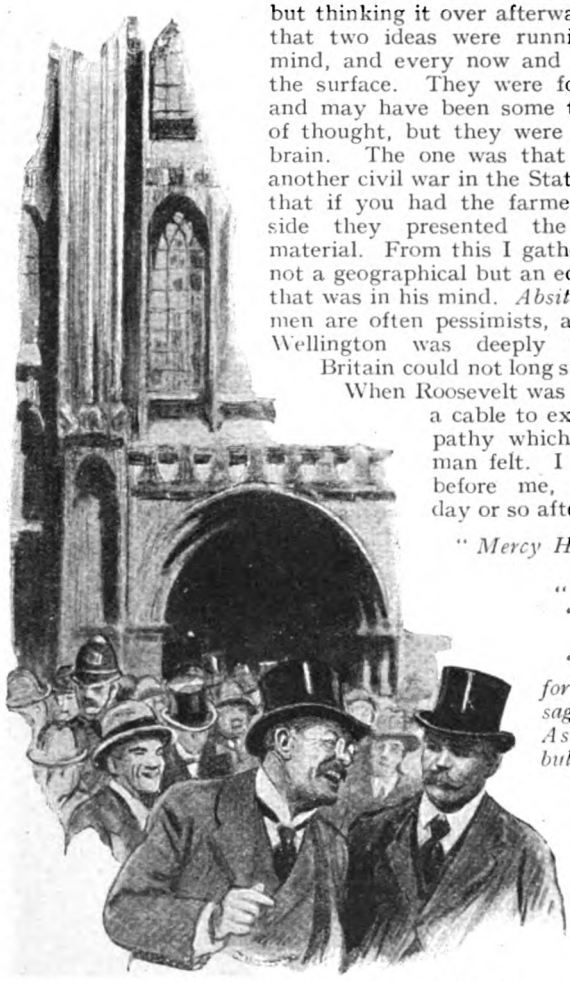
Lloyd George said that there was a time in 1918 when the French were practically out, whereas their papers talk now as if alone they had won the war. A famous American financier who was present corroborated this and added some curious details. He said that in 1918 he was present at a meeting of influential financiers and journalists in France, when it was decided to close down the war. He said: "There is no use your doing so, for America and the British certainly do not mean to stop fighting." To this the others answered: "We would not permit France to be made the cockpit if we ourselves had made terms." That meant that they would have closed their ports, so far as they could, to us. It is very unlikely, in my opinion, that these men really represented chivalrous France. I never realized before how close a thing was, I will not say defeat, but at least a stalemate. Lloyd George told us that in the last two years of the war Britain, besides being predominant in Palestine and other outlying seats of war, had more troops in France than the French had, and lost far more in the field.

They discussed the American debt. Lloyd George said to the American: "We will, of course, pay every penny to the States, even if we collect none of our own debts, but I am afraid that if we are not used well there will be a rankling feeling of injury." The other said: "Yes, you would be very polite over it, but it would be there all the same." I quoted: "But oh, beware my country when my country grows polite!"

Lloyd George was amusing in his reminiscences of French statesmen. Briand seems to have been the wittiest, and Clemenceau the most formidable. When Briand thought that he had been betrayed by friends in the Chamber, he cried: "Can anyone tell me what thirty pieces of silver are at the present rate of exchange?"

AMONG the great men that I have known President Roosevelt occupied a prominent place. He was not a large nor, so far as one could see, a powerful man, but he had tremendous dynamic force and an

iron will, which may account for his reputation as an athlete. He had all the simplicity of real greatness, speaking his mind with great frankness and in the clearest possible English. He had in him a great deal of the boy, a mischievous, adventurous, high-spirited boy, with a deep, strong, thoughtful manhood in the background. We were present, my wife and I, at the Guildhall when he made his memorable speech about Egypt, in which he informed a gathering which contained the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and many of our Cabinet, that we should either rule more strictly or clear out altogether. It was, of course, a most unwarrantable intrusion into our affairs, but it was a calculated indiscretion and very welcome, I believe, to those who were dealing with Egypt. As he made his way through the dense crowd afterwards he passed me and said with a grin: "I say, I let them have it that time, didn't I?" There was the mischievous boy coming out.



Roosevelt said with a grin: "I say, I let them have it that time, didn't I?"

He had a quick, blunt wit which showed itself often in his metaphors. He spoke to me, I remember, of someone who had a nine guinea-pig power brain. One of his entourage told me how the President had been waked once to address some prairie folk at a wayside station. "They have come sixty miles to see you," said his secretary. "They would have come a hundred to see a cat with two heads," said the ruffled President.

I met him once at a small luncheon party at the invitation of Lord Lee, who had soldiered with him in Cuba. He was extremely talkative—in fact, I can hardly remember anyone else saying anything—but thinking it over afterwards I concluded that two ideas were running through his mind, and every now and then coming to the surface. They were formidable ideas, and may have been some temporary wave of thought, but they were certainly in his brain. The one was that there would be another civil war in the States. The second, that if you had the farmer class on your side they presented the best military material. From this I gathered that it was not a geographical but an economic struggle that was in his mind. *Absit omen*, but great men are often pessimists, and the Duke of Wellington was deeply convinced that Britain could not long survive his death.

When Roosevelt was shot I sent him a cable to express that sympathy which every Englishman felt. I have his answer before me, written only a day or so after the event.

"*Mercy Hospital,*
"*Chicago,*
"*Oct. 19th,* 1912.
"*Dear Mr. Doyle,—*
"*Many thanks for your kind message of sympathy. As you know, a bullet wound is rather a serious thing, but all conditions seem to be favourable, and I hope in a few days we will all be relieved from anxiety.*
"*Sincerely yours,*
"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

It is typewritten, but signed in his own hand. I do not think that a more brave and detached letter was ever written by a sufferer.

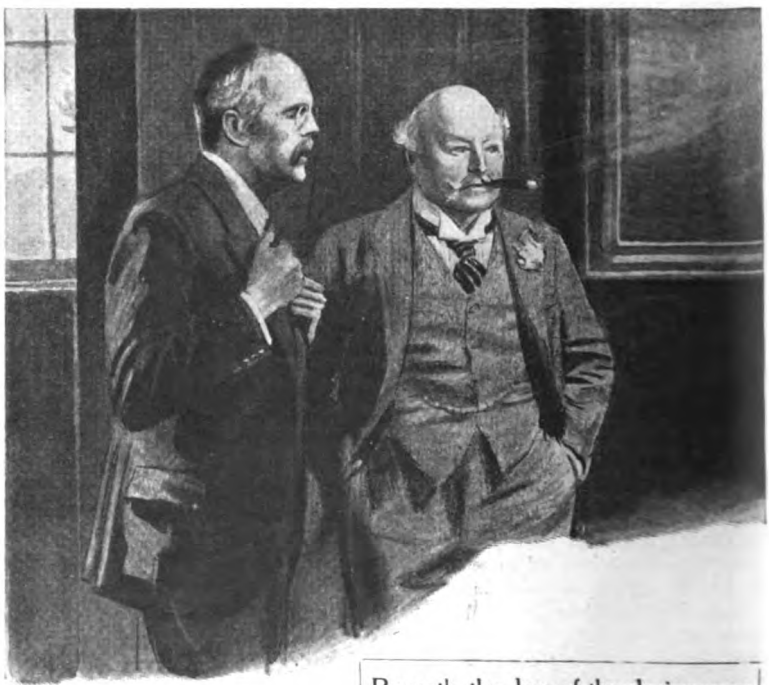
Roosevelt was a very loud, hearty man, with a peculiar wild-beast toothy grin, and an explosive habit of slapping his hand down for emphasis. I jotted down a few of his *obiter dicta* after our conversation. He had no appreciation for Henry James: "He is not a whole man. All that subtlety is really decadence." He was very virile, not to say heroic, in his views. "A man should guard particularly against being led from his duty, especially a dangerous duty, by his women. I guess a woman would have had a bad time if she had tried to lead Leonidas from the pass." Of the German Emperor he said that he was jealous

of King Edward's dog at the King's funeral because he attracted the more notice. Altogether he was one of the raciest talkers I have ever met.

HARDLY any of the great ones of earth whom I have met stand out more clearly than Arthur Balfour, with his willowy figure, his gentle intellectual face, and, as I read it, his soul of steel. I should think that of all men of our day he was the last who would be turned from any path which he had deliberately taken, but, on the other hand, he was capable of standing a most unconscionable time at the place where paths divide, for his mind was so subtle and active that he would always see the two sides of every question and waver between them. He could never have been a pioneer.

The occasion of our first meeting was a most ridiculous one. Old Lord Burnham, of the *Telegraph*, had invited me down to his country house at Beaconsfield—a wonderful house which had been built originally by Waller, the Royalist poet. Burke had lived close by, and the dagger which, in a melodramatic moment, he threw upon the floor of the House, in order to show the dangers of French Republican propaganda, is still on exhibition. I can remember the party well, though nearly all of them are now on the farther side. I see Lady Dorothy Nevill, with her mittened hands and her prim pussy-cat manner, retailing gossip about Disraeli's flirtations. Sir Henry James walks under the trees with bended head, talking to the rising barrister who is destined, as Lord Reading, to be Viceroy of India. Lady Cleveland, mother of Lord Rosebery, is listening, with her old face wreathed in smiles, to Lady Dorothy's scandal. Young Harry Irving looks unutterably bored as Lord Burnham explains golf to him, bending his head over to get a glimpse of the ball round the curve of his goodly waistcoat. Mr. Asquith stands smiling beside them. As one looks back they seem all to have been shadows in a world of shadow.

Lord Burnham's hobby was Turkish baths, and he had an excellent one in the front of the house, the drying-room being the first door on the right as one entered, and being a simple sitting-room so far as appearance went. With his usual kind hospitality Lord Burnham had urged me to try his bath, and having done so I was placed, arrayed in a long towel and with another towel screwed round my head, in the drying-room. Presently the door opened, and there entered Arthur Balfour, Prime Minister of England. He knew nothing of the house or its ways, and I can remember the amazement with which he gazed at me. Lord Burnham, following



Presently the door of the drying-room opened, and there entered Arthur Balfour, Prime Minister of England. I can remember the amazement with which he gazed at me. Lord Burnham introduced me, and I raised the towel on my head.

at his heels, introduced me, and I raised the towel on my head. There were no explanations, and I felt that he went away with the impression that this was my usual costume.

I did not see him after that week-end—he kept his room, I remember, until midday on the Sunday—until some years later, when, after heavy domestic loss, I was endeavouring to collect myself again in a little inn near Dunbar. He heard of my presence, and in his kindness sent a car over from Whittingehame, only a few miles away, with a request that I should come over for a couple of days. There was present his brother, Gerald Balfour, a man with a beautifully refined face and manner, not unlike that of Andrew Lang. His wife is the famous Lady Betty Balfour, the daughter of Lord Lytton. When one thinks of that group of inter-allied families, the Balfours, Cecils, Sidgwicks, and Lyttons, it seems a sort of nerve ganglion of British life. There was also Lady Frances Balfour, who was a daughter of the Duke of Argyll, and not unlike him, as I can remember him, save only for the white whiskers. Her husband was Arthur Balfour's brother, an architect and antiquary, while another brother was Colonel of the London Scottish. Finally there was Miss Alice Balfour, a very sweet and gently intellectual person, who was my actual hostess.

I found Arthur Balfour in great spirits because he had won a golf medal at North Berwick. He seemed as pleased as any schoolboy, and his sister told me that no political success ever gave him the keen pleasure which he had from his golf victory. He was an average player, orthodox in style, and about ten or twelve in handicap. He proved to be a charming host, for he was a good listener, seeming to be really eager to hear your opinion, laughed heartily at small provocation, and talked always very frankly and modestly of himself. After my long solitude I was more loquacious, I remember, than is my way, but he bore it with good humour.

Every night—or at least on the Sunday night—the whole staff of the large rambling establishment, maids and grooms, some twenty in all, came in for prayers, which were read by the head of the house. It was fine to hear groom and statesman praying humbly together that they be forgiven the sins of the day, and merging all earthly distinctions in the presence of that which is above us all.

He was very interesting when he spoke of the outrage which the Russian fleet had committed when, on their way to Japan, they opened fire at the British trawlers on the Dogger Bank. It was curious to hear his gentle voice and to note his listless, impersonal manner while he spoke in this fashion: "I was very angry, really very angry about that affair. If our fleet had been at home I should have been inclined to have stopped them in the Straits. Of course, one should not do that unless one had overpowering force, so as to avoid bloodshed and save the Russian face. Their Ambassador called that morning and gave complete assurances, or really I should have had to do something. He got himself into trouble with his own

Government, who felt that he had given away their case."

I asked him how Cabinet Councils were worked. He said that they voted upon points and went by majorities, unless it was a vital thing, when, of course, the dissenters must resign.

I observed in his character a very great horror of cowardice. Nothing seemed to arouse such scorn in him. He grew quite red, I remember, as he spoke of Lord George Sackville, and recalled that, though he had been broken and should have been shot at the Battle of Minden in 1759, he was none the less Minister of War during the American Campaign. He was also, as I reminded him, a most debauched man, and the murder of his mistress, Miss Reay, the actress, by her true lover, the clergyman Hackman, was one of the *causes célèbres* of that century.

I shall always carry away the memory of that visit, a bright gleam in a dark passage of life. I see very clearly the old house, the huge broken tree outside, inside which a State conspiracy was once hatched, the fine library with its wealth of French memoirs, and, above all, the remarkable man who stood for so much in the life of the country. I was not at that time so convinced of the primary importance of psychic things as I became later, and I regret it, as this would have been my one opportunity to explore a knowledge which at that time was certainly greater than my own. Years later, when the fight was heavy upon me, and when I was almost alone in the polemical arena, I wrote to Mr. Balfour, and charged him with sharing all my convictions and yet leaving me to defend them single-handed. His answer was: "Surely my opinions upon this subject are already sufficiently well known," which may have been an admission that I was right in my description of them, and yet was not much of a prop to me in my time of need.

I CAST my mind back to other statesmen whom I have known, and Mr. Asquith's kindly personality comes into my memory. I remember playing a round of golf with him once—and a very bad player he was—but his conversation as we went round was plus four. He is a naturally sweet-natured man, but under that gentleness there lie judgment and firmness, as was shown at the great crisis of history. He never said too much, but what he did say he lived up to. In conducting us safely through those first two years of war he did that for which he has never had sufficient credit, and the more light we have had since, the more clear it has been that he was really doing all that man could do, in munition work and all other ways. Because he had the solid Yorkshire stolidity, more nervous and excitable people thought that he did not take the war sufficiently seriously, while the constant lies about the pro-German tendencies of his wife increased the evil impression. We owe him a reparation which is second only to that which is due to Lord Haldane.

And that is indeed a heavy one. If one man could be named who has been absolutely indispensable to victory it was Haldane. He it was who built up the whole splendid weapon which flashed so swiftly from its sheath, and which Germany was so amazed to find directed at her breast as she rushed forward upon her furious course. He could not work miracles; he could not introduce conscription when a candidate with such a programme would have been chased from the hustings; he could not prepare the public mind in some dramatic way which would have precipitated the very crash which there was still some chance of avoiding. But all we had he gave us: the eight divisions which saved France, the Territorials who carried on the good work until the new armies were ready, the Officers' Training Corps which strengthened us where we should have been fatally weak. There has never been so foolish and ungrateful a clamour as that which has been raised against Haldane. I remember that when he took the chair for me in the first war lecture which I gave in London there were cries of "Traitor!" from people, chiefly women, among the audience. I had never seen Haldane before and have never seen him since, so I have no personal bias in the matter, but I am proud that it was in my first volume of the History of the War, published in 1915, that I first put forward the unpopular view which will now be more fully accepted.

WITH George Meredith, I had several interesting connections. I have the greatest possible admiration for him at his best, while his worst is such a handicap that I think it will drag four-fifths of his work to oblivion. If his own generation finds him hard to understand, what will our descendants make of him? He will be a cult among a few—a precious few in every sense. And yet I fully recognize that his was the most active, original brain and the most clever pen of any man, novelist or otherwise, of my time.

Knowing this well, it is strange that I can see so limited a future for him. His subtle and intricate mind seemed unable to realize the position of the plain outsiders who represent the world. He could not see how his stained glass might be less effective than the plain transparent substance as a medium for vision. The first requisite is to be intelligible. The second is to be interesting. The third is to be clever. Meredith enormously filled the third, but he was unequal upon the other two. Hence he will never, in spite of the glories of "Richard Feverel," be on an equality with Dickens or Thackeray, who filled all three. He had simply no idea how his words would strike a less complex mind. I remember that once, in the presence of Barrie, Quiller-Couch, and myself, he read out a poem which he had inscribed: "To the British Working-Man," in the *Westminster Gazette*. I don't know what the British working-man made of it, but I am sure that we three were greatly puzzled as to what it was about.

I had written some article upon his work, which had been one of my youthful cults, and that led to his inviting me to see him at his villa at Box Hill—the first of several such visits. There had been a good deal in the papers about his health, so that I was surprised when, as I opened the garden gate, a slight but robust gentleman, in a grey suit and a red tie, swung out of the hall door and came singing loudly down the path. I suppose he was getting on to seventy at the time, but he looked younger, and his artistic face was good to the eye. Greeting me, he pointed to a long steep hill behind the house, and said, "I have just been up to the top for a walk." I looked at the sharp slope, and said, "You must be in good trim to do it." He looked angry, and said, "That would be a proper compliment to pay to an octogenarian." I was a little nettled by his touchiness, so I answered, "I understood that I was talking to an invalid." It really seemed as if my visit would terminate at the garden gate, but presently he relented, and we soon became quite friendly.

He had in his youth been a judge of wine, and had still a reverence for a good vintage, but unfortunately some nervous complaint from which he suffered had caused the doctors to prohibit it absolutely. When lunch came round he asked me with a very earnest air whether I could undertake to drink a whole bottle of Burgundy. I answered that I saw no insuperable difficulty. A dusty old bottle was tenderly carried up, which I disposed of, Meredith taking a friendly interest in its dispatch. "The fact is," said he, "I love my wine, and my little cellar was laid down with care and judgment, so that when some guest comes and drinks a glass and wastes the rest of the bottle it goes to my heart. It really did me good to see you enjoy that one." I need not say that I intimated that I was always prepared to oblige.

His conversation was extraordinarily vivid and dramatic, uttered in a most vehement tone. It may have been artificial and it may have been acting, but it was very arresting and entertaining. The talk got upon Napoleon's marshals, and you would have thought that he knew them intimately, and he did Murat's indignation at being told to charge "*au bout*," as if he ever charged any other way, in a fashion which would have brought down the house. Every now and then he brought out a Meredithian sentence which sounded comic when applied to domestic matters. When the jelly swayed about as the maid put it on the table he said, "The jelly, Mary, is as treacherous as the Trojan Horse." He laughed when I told him how my groom, enlisted as a waiter for some special dinner, said "Huddup, there!" to the jelly in similar circumstances.

After lunch we walked up a steep path to the little chalet or summer-house where he used to write. He wished to read me a novel which he had begun twenty years before, but which he had not had the heart to go on with. I liked it greatly—and we roared with laughter at his description of an old sea-dog who turned up the collar of his coat when he went into action, as if the bullets were rain. He said that my hearty enjoyment encouraged him to go on with it, and it has since appeared as "The Amazing Marriage," but whether I really had anything to do with it I do not know. I should be proud to think so.

The nervous complaint from which he suffered caused him to fall down occasionally. As we walked up the narrow path to the chalet I heard him fall behind me, but judged from the sound that it was a mere slither and could not have hurt him. Therefore I walked on as if I had heard nothing. He was a fiercely proud old man, and my instincts told me that his humiliation in being helped up would be far greater than any relief I could give him. It was certainly a nice point to decide.

George Meredith's religious convictions were very difficult to decide. He certainly had no glimmering, so far as I could see, of any psychic element in life, and I should imagine that on the whole he shared the opinions of his friend John Morley, which were completely negative. And yet I remember his assuring me that prayer was a very necessary thing, and that one should

never abandon prayer. "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is granted," says the Aphorist in "Richard Feverel." How far these positions can be harmonized I do not know. I suppose that one may say that God is unknown, and yet rear a mental temple to the unknown God.

RUDYARD KIPLING I know far less than I should, considering how deeply I admire his writings, and that we live in the same county, but we are both absorbed in work, and both much away from home, which may explain it. I can well remember how eagerly I bought his first book, "Plain Tales from the Hills," in the old Southsea days, when buying a book was a rare strain upon my exchequer. I read it with delight and realized not only that a new force had arisen in literature, but that a new method of story writing had appeared which was very different from my own adherence to the careful plot artfully developed. This was go-as-you-please, take-it-or-leave-it work, which glowed suddenly up into an incandescent phrase or paragraph which was the more effective for its sudden advent. In form his stories were crude, and yet in effect—which, after all, is everything—they were superb. It showed me that methods could not be stereotyped and that there was a more excellent way, even if it were beyond my reach.

I loved the "Barrack Room Ballads" also, and such poems as "The Bolivar," "East and West," and, above all, the badly-named "Envoi" became part of my very self. I always read the latter aloud to my little circle before we start on any fresh expedition, because it contains the very essence of travel, romance, and high adventure.

I saw Kipling most nearly in his very early days when he lived at Brattleboro', a little village in Vermont, U.S.A., in a chivalrous desire to keep his newly-married wife in touch with her own circle. In 1894, as I have recorded, there was a good deal of tail-twisting going on in the States, and Kipling pulled a few feathers out of the eagle's tail in retaliation, which caused many screams of protest, for the American was far more sensitive to such things than the case-hardened Briton. I say "was," for I think as a nation, with an increased assurance of their own worth and strength, they are now more careless of criticism. The result at the time was to add oil to flames, and I, as a passionate believer in Anglo-American union, wrote to Kipling to

I had brought my golf clubs and gave Kipling lessons while the New England rustics watched us, wondering what on earth we were at, for golf was unknown in America at that time.

remonstrate. He received my protest very good-humouredly, and it led to my visit to his country home. As a matter of fact, the concern shown in America when the poet lay at death's door a few years later showed that the rancour was not very deep. Perhaps he was better known at that time in America than in England, for I remember sitting beside a busman in London who bowed his red face to my ear and said, "'Beg your pardon, sir, but who is this 'ere Kilpin?"

I had two great days in Vermont, and have a grateful remembrance of Mrs. Kipling's hospitality. The poet read me "McAndrew's Hymn," which he had just done, and surprised me by his dramatic power, which enabled him to sustain the Glasgow accent throughout, so that the angular Scottish greaser simply walked the room. I had brought up my golf clubs and gave him lessons in a field while the New England rustics watched us from afar, wondering what on earth we were at, for golf was unknown in America at that time. We parted good friends, and the visit was an oasis in my rather dreary pilgrimage.

My glimpses of Kipling since then have been few and scattered, but I had the pleasure several times of meeting his old father, a most delightful and lovable person, who told a story quite as well as his famous son. As the mother was also a very remarkable woman, it is no wonder that he carried such a cargo.

HENRY IRVING is one of the other great men whom I have met at close quarters, for his acting of Gregory Brewster, in "A Story of Waterloo," brought us in contact.

When he was producing "Coriolanus" he came down to Hindhead and used to drop in of an evening. He was fond of a glass of port—indeed, he was one of the four great men who were stated (probably untruly) by the Hon. G. Russell to drink a bottle each night—being the only trait which these great men had in common. The others, I remember, were Tennyson, Gladstone, and Moses Montefiore, and of the last I believe it was really true. Like all bad habits it overtook the sinner at last, and he was cut off at the age of one hundred and sixteen.

Irving had a curious dry wit which was occasionally sardonic and ill-natured. I can well believe that his rehearsals were often the occasion for heart-burnings among the men and tears among the ladies. The unexpectedness of his remarks took one aback. I remember when my friend Hamilton sat up with me into the "wee sma' hours" with the famous man he became rather didactic on the subject of the Deity or the universe or some other tremendous topic, which he treated very well and at great length. Irving sat with his intense eyes riveted upon the speaker's face, which encouraged Hamilton to go on and on. When at last he had finished Irving remarked, "*What* a low comedian you would have made!" He wound up his visit by giving me his copy of "Coriolanus" with all his notes and stage directions—a very precious relic.

Many visions of old times rise before my eyes as I write, but this chapter would lose all proportion should I dwell upon them. I see Henley, the formidable cripple, a red-bearded, loud-voiced buccaneer of a man who could only crawl, for his back appeared to be broken. He was a great poet and critic who seemed to belong to the roaring days of Marlowe of the mighty line and the pothouse fray. I see Rider Haggard too, first as the young spruce diplomatist, later as the worn and bearded man with strange vague tendencies to mysticism. Bernard Shaw, too, I see with the pleasant silky voice and the biting phrase. It was strange that all the mild vegetables which formed his diet made him more pugnacious and, I must add, more uncharitable than the carnivorous man, so that I have known no literary man who was more ruthless to other people's feelings. And yet to meet him was always to like him. He could not resist a bitter jest or the perverted pleasure of taking up an unpopular attitude. As an example I remember Harry Irving telling me that when Shaw was invited to his father's funeral he wrote in reply: "If I were at Westminster Henry Irving would turn in his grave, just as Shakespeare would turn in his grave were Henry Irving at Stratford." I may not have it verbally exact, but that is near enough. It is the kind of outrageous thing that he would say. And yet one can forgive him all when one reads the magnificent dialogue of some of his plays. If he is sub-human in his emotions he is occasionally super-human in his intellect.

SHAW was always a thorn in Irving's side, and was usually the one jarring note among the chorus of praise which greeted each fresh production. At a first night at the Lyceum—those wonderful first nights which have never been equalled—the lanky Irishman, with his greenish face, his red beard, and his sardonic

expression, must have been like the death's head at the banquet to Irving. Irving ascribed this animosity to Shaw's pique because his plays were not accepted, but in this I am sure that he did an injustice. It was simply that contrary twist in the man which made him delight in opposing whatever anyone else approved. There is nothing constructive in him, and he is bound to be in perpetual opposition. No one, for example, was stronger for peace and for non-militarism than he, and I remember that when I took the chair at a meeting at Hindhead to back up the Czar's peace proposals at The Hague, I thought to myself, as I spied Shaw in a corner of the room, "Well, this time, at any rate, he must be in sympathy." But, far from being so, he sprang to his feet and put forward a number of ingenious reasons why these proposals for peace would be disastrous. Do what you could, he was always against you.

Perhaps it is no bad thing to have the other point of view continually stated, and the British stand that sort of thing better than other nations. Had Shaw said in America what he said in England about the war whilst it was in progress, he would have been in personal danger. There were times, however, when his queer, contrary impulses became perfectly brutal in their working. One was at the time of the *Titanic* disaster, when he deliberately wrote a letter, while the wounds were raw, overwhelming everyone concerned with bitter criticism. I was moved to write a remonstrance, and we had a sharp debate in public, which did not in any way modify our kindly personal relations. I can recall a smaller, but even more unjustifiable, example of his strange nature when he was staying at Hindhead. A garden party had been got up for some charity, and it included the woodland scenes of "As You Like It," which were done by amateurs, and very well done, too. Shaw, with no provocation, wrote a whole column of abuse in the local paper, spattering all the actors and their performance with ridicule, and covering them with confusion, though, indeed, they had nothing to be ashamed of.

One mentions these things as characteristic of one side of the man, and as a proof, I fear, that the adoption by the world of a vegetarian diet will not bring unkind thoughts or actions to an end. But with it all Shaw is a genial creature to meet, and I am sure that there is a human, kindly side to his nature, though it has not been presented to the public.

WELLS, too, I have known long, and, indeed, I must have often entered the draper's shop in which he was employed at Southsea, for the proprietor was a patient of mine. Wells is one of the great fruits which popular education has given us, for he came, as he is proud to state, from the heart of the people. His democratic frankness and complete absence of class feeling are occasionally embarrassing. I remember his asking me once if I had played cricket at Liphook. I said that I had. He said: "Did you notice an old fellow who acts as professional and ground-keeper?" I said that I had. "That was my father," said Wells. I was too much surprised to answer, and could only congratulate myself that I had made no unpleasant comments before I knew the identity of the old man. Like all the world, I admire Wells's many-sided genius, but I consider that his want of knowledge and appreciation of the psychic side of things will seriously discount the value of his historical work in the minds of our descendants.

Willie Hornung, my brother-in-law, is another of my vivid memories. He was a Dr. Johnson without the learning, but with a finer wit. No one could say a neater thing, and his writings, good as they are, never adequately represented the powers of the man or the quickness of his brain. These things depend upon the time and the fashion and go flat in the telling, but I remember how, when I showed him the record of someone who claimed to have done the hundred yards under ten seconds, he said, "It is a sprinter's error." Golf he could not abide, for he said it was "unsportsmanlike to hit a sitting ball." His criticism upon my Sherlock Holmes was: "Though he might be more humble, there is no police like Holmes."

Jerome, too, is an old friend. He is an adventurous soul, and at one time started a four-in-hand. I remember sitting on the top of it, and when one of the leaders turned right round and took a good look at the driver, I thought it was time to get down. Maxwell, also, is an old friend. He is, of course, the son of Miss Braddon, who married a publisher of that name. I respect him for doing a man's work in the war, when, though he was fifty years of age and had led a sedentary life, he volunteered for a fighting battalion, a credit which he shares with A. E. W. Mason. Maxwell's work has always greatly appealed to me, and I have long looked upon him as the greatest novelist that we possess.

(To be continued.)

Photographs by Hoppé, Vandyk, Cundy, Histed, Thomson, and Manuel.

THE HEART OF A GOOF

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

IT was a morning when all Nature shouted "Fore!" The breeze, as it blew gently up from the valley, seemed to bring a message of hope and cheer, whispering of chip-shots holed and brassies landing squarely on the meat. The fairway, as yet unscarred by the irons of a hundred dubs, smiled greenly up at the azure sky; and the sun, peeping above the trees, looked like a giant golf-ball perfectly lofted by the mashie of some unseen god and about to drop dead by the pin of the eighteenth. It was the day of the opening of the course after the long winter, and a crowd of considerable dimensions had collected at the first tee. Plus fours gleamed in the sunshine, and the air was charged with happy anticipation.

In all that gay throng there was but one sad face. It belonged to the man who was waggling his driver over the new ball perched on its little hill of sand. This man seemed careworn, hopeless. He had the aspect of one who knows that he is shortly about to receive it in the gizzard from a remorseless Fate. He gazed down the fairway, shifted his feet, waggled, gazed down the fairway again, shifted the dogs once more, and waggled afresh. He waggled as Hamlet might have waggled, moodily, irresolutely. Then, at last, he swung, and, taking from his caddie the niblick which the intelligent lad had been holding in readiness from the moment when he had walked on to the tee, trudged wearily off to play his second.

The Oldest Member, who had been observing the scene with a benevolent eye from his favourite chair on the terrace, sighed.

"Poor Jenkinson," he said, "does not improve."

"No," agreed his companion, a young man with open features and a handicap of six. "And yet I happen to know that he has been taking lessons all the winter at one of those indoor places."

"Futile, quite futile," said the Sage, with a shake of his snowy head. "There is no wizard living who could make that man go round in an average of sevens. I keep advising him to give up the game."

"You!" cried the young man, raising a shocked and startled face from the driver with which he was toying. "*You* told him to give up golf! Why, I thought——"

"I understand and approve of your horror," said the Oldest Member, gently. "But you must bear in mind that Jenkinson's is not an ordinary case. You know and I know scores of men who have never broken a hundred and twenty in their lives and yet contrive to be happy, useful members of society. However badly they may play, they are able to forget. But with Jenkinson it is different. He is not one of those who can take it or leave it alone. His only chance of happiness lies in complete abstinence. Jenkinson is a goof."

"A what?"

"A goof," repeated the Sage. "One of those unfortunate beings who have allowed this noblest of sports to get too great a grip upon them, who have permitted it to eat into their souls like some malignant growth. The goof, you must understand, is not like you and me. He broods. He becomes morbid. His goofery unfits him for the battles of life. Jenkinson, for example, was once a man with a glowing future in the hay, corn, and feed business; but a constant stream of hooks, tops, and slices gradually made him so diffident and mistrustful of himself that he let opportunity after opportunity slip, with the result that other, sterner hay, corn, and feed merchants

Copyright, 1924, by P. G. Wodehouse.

passed him in the race. Every time he had the chance to carry through some big deal in hay, or to execute some flashing *coup* in corn and feed, the fatal diffidence generated by a hundred rotten rounds would undo him. I understand his bankruptcy may be expected at any moment."

"My golly!" said the young man, deeply impressed. "I hope I never become a goof. Do you mean to say there is really no cure except giving up the game?"

The Oldest Member was silent for a while.

"It is curious that you should have asked that question," he said at last, "for only this morning I was thinking of the one case in my experience where a goof was enabled to overcome his deplorable malady. It was owing to a girl, of course. The longer I live, the more I come to see that most things are. But as you will no doubt wish to hear the story from the beginning——"

The young man rose with the startled haste of some wild creature which, wandering through the undergrowth, perceives the trap in his path.

"I should love to," he mumbled, "only I shall be losing my place at the tee."

"The goof in question," said the Sage, attaching himself with quiet firmness to the youth's coat-button, "was a man of about your age, by name Ferdinand Dibble. I knew him well. In fact, it was to me——"

"Some other time, eh?"

"It was to me," proceeded the Sage, placidly, "that he came for sympathy in the great crisis of his life, and I am not ashamed to say that when he had finished laying bare his soul to me there were tears in my eyes. My heart bled for the boy."

"I bet it did. But——"

The Oldest Member pushed him gently back into his seat.

"Golf," he said, "is the Great Mystery. Like some capricious goddess——"

The young man, who had been exhibiting symptoms of feverishness, appeared to become resigned. He sighed softly.

"Did you ever read 'The Ancient Mariner'?" he said.

"Many years ago," said the Oldest Member. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the young man. "It just occurred to me."

GOLF (resumed the Oldest Member) is the Great Mystery. Like some capricious goddess, it bestows its favours with what would appear an almost fatheaded lack of method and discrimination. On every side we see big two-fisted he-men floundering round in three figures, stopping every few minutes to let through little shrimps with knock knees and hollow cheeks who are tearing off snappy seventy-fours. Giants of finance have to accept a stroke per from their junior clerks. Men capable of governing empires fail to control a small white ball which presents no difficulties whatever to others with one ounce more brain than a cuckoo-clock. Mysterious, but there it is. There was no apparent reason why Ferdinand Dibble should not have been a competent golfer. He had strong wrists and a good eye. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he was a dub. And on a certain evening in June I realized that he was also a goof. I found it out quite suddenly as the result of a conversation which we had on this very terrace.

I was sitting here that evening, thinking of this and that, when by the corner of the club-house I observed young Dibble in conversation with a girl in white. I could not see who she was, for her back was turned. Presently they parted, and Ferdinand came slowly across to where I sat. His air was dejected. He had had the boots licked off him earlier in the afternoon by Jimmy Fothergill, and it was to this that I attributed his gloom. I was to find out in a few moments that I was partly but not entirely correct in this surmise. He took the next chair to mine and for several minutes sat staring moodily down into the valley.

"I've just been talking to Barbara Medway," he said, suddenly breaking the silence.

"Indeed?" I said. "A delightful girl."

"She's going away for the summer to Marvis Bay."

"She will take the sunshine with her."

"You bet she will!" said Ferdinand Dibble, with extraordinary warmth, and there was another long silence.

Presently Ferdinand uttered a hollow groan.

"I love her, dammit!" he muttered, brokenly. "Oh, golly, how I love her!"

I was not surprised at his making me the recipient of his confidences like this. Most of the young folk in the place brought their troubles to me sooner or later.

"And does she return your love?"

"I don't know. I haven't asked her."

"Why not? I should have thought the point not without its interest for you."

Ferdinand gnawed the handle of his putter distractedly.

"I haven't the nerve," he burst out at length. "I simply can't summon up the cold gall to ask a girl, least of all an angel like her, to marry me. You see, it's like this. Every time I work myself up to the point of having a dash at it, I go out and get trimmed by someone giving me a stroke a hole. Every time I feel I've mustered up enough pep to propose, I take a ten on a

bogey three. Every time I think I'm in good mid-season form for putting my fate to the test, to win or lose it all, something goes all blooey with my swing and I slice into the rough at every tee. And then my self-confidence leaves me. I become nervous, tongue-tied, diffident. I wish to goodness I knew the man who invented this infernal game. I'd strangle him. But I suppose he's been dead for ages. Still, I could go and jump on his grave."

It was at this point that I understood all, and the heart within me sank like lead. The truth was out. Ferdinand Dibble was a goof.

"Come, come, my boy," I said, though feeling the uselessness of any words. "Master this weakness."

"I can't."

"Try!"

"I have tried."

He gnawed his putter again.

"She was asking me just now if I couldn't manage to come to Marvis Bay, too," he said.

"That surely is encouraging? It suggests that she is not entirely indifferent to your society."

"Yes, but what's the use? Do you know," he said, a gleam coming into his eyes for a moment, "I have a feeling that if I could ever beat some really fairly good player—just once—I could bring the thing off." The gleam faded. "But what chance is there of that?"

It was a question which I did not care to answer. I merely patted his shoulder sympathetically, and after a little while he left me and walked away. I was still sitting there, thinking over his hard case, when Barbara Medway came out of the club-house.

She, too, seemed grave and preoccupied, as if there was something on her mind. She took the chair which Ferdinand had vacated and sighed wearily.

"Have you ever felt," she asked, "that you would like to bang a man on the head with something hard and heavy? With knobs on?"

I said I had sometimes experienced such a desire, and asked if she had any particular man in mind. She seemed to hesitate for a moment before replying, then apparently made up her mind to confide in me. My advanced years carry with them certain pleasant compensations, one of which is that nice girls often confide in me. I frequently find myself enrolled as a father confessor on the most intimate matters by beautiful creatures from whom many a younger man would give his eye-teeth to get a friendly word. Besides, I had known Barbara since she was a child. Frequently—though not recently—I had given her her evening bath. These things form a bond.

"Why are men such chumps?" she exclaimed.

"You still have not told me who it is that has caused these harsh words. Do I know him?"

"Of course you do. You've just been talking to him."

"Ferdinand Dibble? But why should

"Why are men such chumps?" she exclaimed.

you wish to bang Ferdinand Dibble on the head with something hard and heavy with knobs on ? "

" Because he's such a goop."

" You mean a goof ? " I queried, wondering how she could have penetrated the unhappy man's secret.

" No, a goop. A goop is a man who's in love with a girl and won't tell her so. I am as certain as I am of anything that Ferdinand is fond of me."

" Your instinct is unerring. He has just been confiding in me on that very point."

" Well, why doesn't he confide in *me*, the poor fish ? " cried the high-spirited girl, petulantly flicking a pebble at a passing grasshopper. " I can't be expected to fling myself into his arms unless he gives some sort of a hint that he's ready to catch me."

" Would it help if I were to repeat to him the substance of this conversation of ours ? "

" If you breathe a word of it, I'll never speak to you again," she cried. " I'd rather die an awful death than have any man think I wanted him so badly that I had to send relays of messengers begging him to marry me."

I saw her point.

" Then I fear," I said, gravely, " that there is nothing to be done. One can only wait and hope. It may be that in the years to come Ferdinand Dibble will acquire a nice lissom wristy swing with the head kept rigid and the right leg firmly braced and——"

" What are you talking about ? "

" I was toying with the hope that some sunny day Ferdinand Dibble would cease to be a goof."

" You mean a goop ? "

" No, a goof. A goof is a man who——" And I went on to explain the peculiar psychological difficulties which lay in the way of any declaration of affection on Ferdinand's part.

" But I never heard of anything so ridiculous in my life," she ejaculated. " Do you mean to say that he is waiting till he is good at golf before he asks me to marry him ? "

" It is not quite so simple as that," I said, sadly. " Many bad golfers marry, feeling that a wife's loving solicitude may improve their game. But they are rugged, thick-skinned men, not sensitive and introspective like Ferdinand. Ferdinand has allowed himself to become morbid. It is one of the chief merits of golf that non-success at the game induces a certain decent humility which keeps a man from pluming himself too much on any petty triumphs he may achieve in other walks of life ; but in all things there is a happy mean, and with Ferdinand this humility has gone too far. It has taken all the spirit out of him. He feels crushed and worthless. He is grateful to caddies when they accept a tip instead of drawing themselves up to their full height and flinging the money in his face."

" Then do you mean that things have got to go on like this for ever ? "

I thought for a moment.

" It is a pity," I said, " that you could not have induced Ferdinand to go to Marvis Bay for a month or two."

" Why ? "

" Because it seems to me, thinking the thing over, that it is just possible that Marvis Bay might cure him. At the hotel there he would find collected a mob of golfers—I use the term in its broadest sense, to embrace the paralytics and the men who play left-handed—whom even he would be able to beat. When I was last at Marvis Bay, the hotel links were a sort of Sargasso Sea into which had drifted all the pitiful flotsam and jetsam of golf. I have seen things done on that course at which I shuddered and averted my eyes—and I am not a weak man. If Ferdinand can polish up his game so as to go round in a fairly steady hundred and five, I fancy there is hope. But I understand he is not going to Marvis Bay."

" Oh, yes, he is," said the girl.

" Indeed ! He did not tell me that when we were talking just now."

" He didn't know it then. He will when I have had a few words with him."

And she walked with firm steps back into the club-house.

IT has been well said that there are many kinds of golf, beginning at the top with the golf of professionals and the best amateurs and working down through the golf of ossified men to that of Scotch University professors. Until recently this last was looked upon as the lowest possible depth ; but nowadays, with the growing popularity of summer hotels, we are able to add a brand still lower, the golf you find at places like Marvis Bay.

To Ferdinand Dibble, coming from a club where the standard of play was rather unusually high, Marvis Bay was a revelation, and for some days after his arrival there he went about dazed, like a man who cannot believe it is really true. To go out on the links at this summer resort was like entering a new world. The hotel was full of stout, middle-aged men who, after a mis-spent youth devoted to making money, had taken to a game at which real proficiency can only be acquired by those who start playing in their cradles and keep their weight down. Out on the course each

morning you could see representatives of every nightmare style that was ever invented. There was the man who seemed to be attempting to deceive his ball and lull it into a false security by looking away from it and then making a lightning slash in the apparent hope of catching it off its guard. There was the man who wielded his mid-iron like one killing snakes. There was the man who addressed his ball as if he were stroking a cat, the man who drove as if he were cracking a whip, the man who brooded over each shot like one whose heart is bowed down by bad news from home, and the man who scooped with his mashie as if he were ladling soup. By the end of the first week Ferdinand Dibble was the acknowledged champion of the place. He had gone through the entire menagerie like a bullet through a cream puff.

First, scarcely daring to consider the possibility of success, he had taken on the man who tried to catch his ball off its guard and had beaten him five up and four to play. Then, with gradually growing confidence, he tackled in turn the Cat-Stroker, the Whip-Cracker, the Heart Bowed Down, and the Soup-Scooper, and walked all over their faces with spiked shoes. And as these were the leading local amateurs, whose prowess the octogenarians and the men who went round in bath-chairs vainly strove to emulate, Ferdinand Dibble was faced on the eighth morning of his visit by the startling fact that he had no more worlds to conquer. He was monarch of all he surveyed, and, what is more, had won his first trophy, the prize in the great medal-play handicap tournament, in which he had nosed in ahead of the field by two strokes, edging out his nearest rival, a venerable old gentleman, by means of a brilliant and unexpected four on the last hole. The prize was a handsome pewter mug about the size of the old oaken bucket, and Ferdinand used to go to his room immediately after dinner to croon over it like a mother over her child.

You are wondering, no doubt, why, in these circumstances, he did not take advantage of the new spirit of exhilarated pride which had replaced his old humility and instantly propose to Barbara Medway. I will tell you. He did not propose to Barbara because Barbara was not there. At the last moment she had been detained at home to nurse a sick parent and had been compelled to postpone her visit for a couple of weeks. He could, no doubt, have proposed in one of the daily letters which he wrote to her, but somehow, once he started writing, he found that he used up so much space describing his best shots on the links that day that it was difficult to squeeze in a declaration of undying passion. After all, you can hardly cram that sort of thing into a postscript.

He decided, therefore, to wait till she arrived, and meanwhile pursued his conquering course. The longer he waited the better, in one way, for every morning and afternoon that passed was adding new layers to his self-esteem. Day by day in every way he grew chestier and chestier.

MEANWHILE, however, dark clouds were gathering. Sullen mutterings were to be heard in corners of the hotel lounge and the spirit of revolt was abroad. For Ferdinand's chestiness had not escaped the notice of his defeated rivals. There is nobody so chesty as a normally unchesty man who suddenly becomes chesty, and I am sorry to say that the chestiness which had come to Ferdinand was the aggressive type of chestiness which breeds enemies. He had developed a habit of holding the game up in order to give his opponent advice. The Whip-Cracker had not forgiven, and never would forgive, his well-meant but galling criticism of his back-swing. The Scooper, who had always scooped since the day when, at the age of sixty-four, he subscribed to the Correspondence Course which was to teach him golf in twelve lessons by mail, resented being told by a snip of a boy that the mashie-stroke should be a smooth, unhurried swing. The Snake-Killer—— But I need not weary you with a detailed recital of these men's grievances; it is enough to say that they all had it in for Ferdinand, and one night after dinner they met in the lounge to decide what was to be done about it.

A nasty spirit was displayed by all.

"A mere lad telling me how to use my mashie!" growled the Scooper. "Smooth and unhurried my left eyeball! I get it up, don't I? Well, what more do you want?"

"I keep telling him that mine is the old full St. Andrews swing," muttered the Whip-Cracker, between set teeth, "but he won't listen to me."

"He ought to be taken down a peg or two," hissed the Snake-Killer. It is not easy to hiss a sentence without a single "s" in it, and the fact that he succeeded in doing so shows to what a pitch of emotion the man had been goaded by Ferdinand's maddening air of superiority.

"Yes, but what can we do?" queried an octogenarian, when this last remark had been passed on to him down his ear-trumpet.

"That's the trouble," sighed the Scooper. "What can we do?" And there was a sorrowful shaking of heads.

"I know!" exclaimed the Cat-Stroker, who had not hitherto spoken. He was a

lawyer, and a man of subtle and sinister mind. "I have it! There's a boy in my office—young Parsloe—who could beat this man Dibble hollow. I'll wire him to come down here and we'll spring him on this fellow and knock some of the conceit out of him."

There was a chorus of approval.

"But are you sure he can beat him?" asked the Snake-Killer, anxiously. "It would never do to make a mistake."

"Of course I'm sure," said the Cat-Stroker. "George Parsloe once went round in ninety-four."

"Many changes there have been since 'ninety-four," said the octogenarian, nodding sagely. "Ah, many, many changes. None of these motor-cars then, tearing about and killing——"

Kindly hands led him off to have an egg-and-milk, and the remaining conspirators returned to the point at issue with bent brows.

"Ninety-four?" said the Scooper, incredulously. "Do you mean counting every stroke?"

"Counting every stroke."

"Not conceding himself any putts?"

"Not one."

"Wire him to come at once," said the meeting with one voice.

That night the Cat-Stroker approached Ferdinand, smooth, subtle, lawyer-like.

"Oh, Dibble," he said, "just the man I wanted to see. Dibble, there's a young friend of mine coming down here who goes in for golf a little. George Parsloe is his name. I was wondering if you could spare time to give him a game. He is just a novice, you know."

"I shall be delighted to play a round with him," said Ferdinand, kindly.

"He might pick up a pointer or two from watching you," said the Cat-Stroker.

"True, true," said Ferdinand.

"Then I'll introduce you when he shows up."

"Delighted," said Ferdinand.

He was in excellent humour that night, for he had had a letter from Barbara saying that she was arriving on the next day but one.

IT was Ferdinand's healthy custom of a morning to get up in good time and take a dip in the sea before breakfast. On the morning of the day of Barbara's arrival, he arose as usual, donned his flannels, took a good look at the cup, and started out. It was a fine, fresh morning, and he glowed both externally and internally. As he crossed the links, for the nearest route to the water was through the fairway of the seventh, he was whistling happily and rehearsing in his mind the opening sentences of his proposal. For it was his firm resolve that night after dinner to ask Barbara to marry him. He was proceeding over the smooth turf without a care in the world when there was a sudden cry of "Fore!" and the next moment a golf ball, missing him by inches, sailed up the fairway and came to rest fifty yards from where he stood. He looked round and observed a figure coming towards him from the tee.

The distance from the tee was fully a hundred and thirty yards. Add fifty to that, and you have a hundred and eighty yards. No such drive had been made on the Marvis Bay links since their foundation, and such is the generous spirit of the true golfer that Ferdinand's first emotion, after the not inexcusable spasm of panic caused by the hum of the globule past his ear, was one of cordial admiration. By some kindly miracle, he supposed, one of his hotel acquaintances had been permitted for once in his life to time a drive right. It was only when the other man came up that there began to steal over him a sickening apprehension. The faces of all those who hewed divots on the hotel course were familiar to him, and the fact that this fellow was a stranger seemed to point with dreadful certainty to his being the man he had agreed to play.

"Sorry," said the man. He was a tall, strikingly handsome youth with brown eyes and a dark moustache.

"Oh, that's all right," said Ferdinand. "Er—do you always drive like that?"

"Well, I generally get a bit longer ball, but I'm off my drive this morning. It's lucky I came out and got this practice. I'm playing a match to-morrow with a fellow named Dibble, who's a local champion or something."

"Me," said Ferdinand, humbly.

"Eh? Oh, you?" Mr. Parsloe eyed him appraisingly. "Well, may the best man win."

As this was precisely what Ferdinand was afraid was going to happen, he nodded in a sickly manner and tottered off to his bathe. The magic had gone out of the morning. The sun still shone, but in a silly, feeble way; and a cold and depressing wind had sprung up. For Ferdinand's inferiority complex, which had seemed cured for ever, was back again, doing business at the old stand.

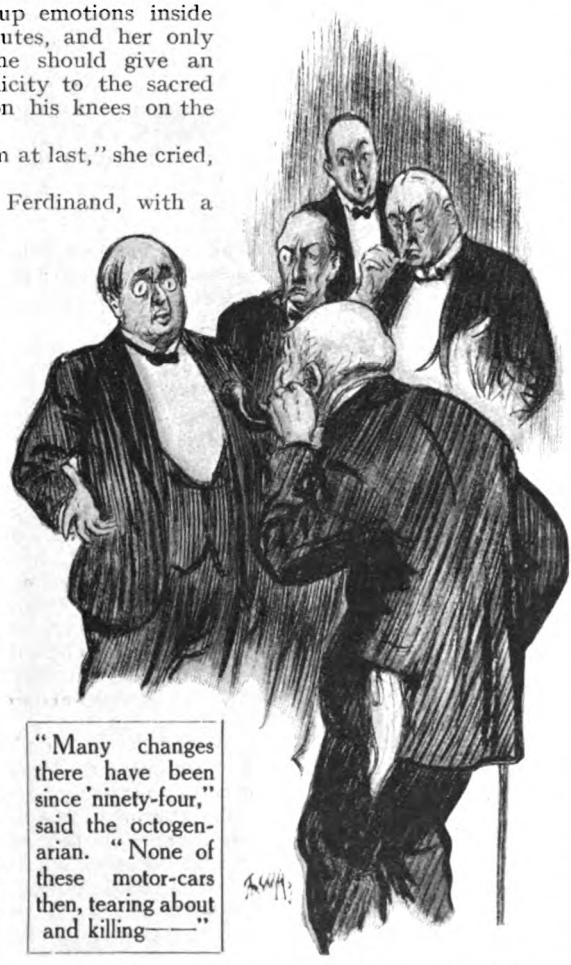
HOW sad it is in this life that the moments to which we have looked forward with the most glowing anticipation so often turn out on arrival flat, cold, and disappointing! For ten days Barbara Medway had been living for that

meeting with Ferdinand, when getting out of the train she would see him popping about on the horizon with the love-light sparkling in his eyes and words of devotion trembling on his lips. The poor girl never doubted for an instant that he would unleash his pent-up emotions inside the first five minutes, and her only worry was lest he should give an embarrassing publicity to the sacred scene by falling on his knees on the station platform.

"Well, here I am at last," she cried, gaily.

"Hullo!" said Ferdinand, with a twisted smile.

The girl looked at him, chilled. How could she know that his peculiar manner was due entirely to the severe attack of cold feet resultant upon his meeting with George Parsloe that morning? The interpretation which she placed upon it was that he was not glad to see her. If he had behaved like this before, she would of course have put it down to ingrowing goofery, but now she had his written statements to prove that for the last ten days his golf had been one long series of triumphs.



"Many changes there have been since 'ninety-four," said the octogenarian. "None of these motor-cars then, tearing about and killing——"

"I got your letters," she said, persevering bravely.

"I thought you would," said Ferdinand, absently.

"You seem to have been doing wonders."

"Yes."

There was a silence.

"Have a nice journey?" said Ferdinand.

"Very," said Barbara.

She spoke coldly, for she was madder than a wet hen. She saw it all now. In the ten days since they had parted, his love, she realized, had waned. Some other girl, met in the romantic surroundings of this picturesque resort, had supplanted her in his affections. She knew how quickly Cupid gets off the mark at a summer hotel, and for an instant she blamed herself for ever having been so ivory-skulled as to let him come to this place alone. Then regret was swallowed up in wrath, and she became so glacial that Ferdinand, who had been on the point of telling her the secret of his gloom, retired into his shell and conversation during the drive to the hotel never soared above a certain level. Ferdinand said the sunshine was nice and Barbara said yes it was nice, and Ferdinand said it looked pretty on the water and Barbara said yes it did look pretty on the water, and Ferdinand said he hoped it was not going to rain and Barbara said yes it would be a pity if it rained. And then there was another lengthy silence.

"How is my uncle?" asked Barbara at last.

I omitted to mention that the individual to whom I have referred as the Cat-Stroker was Barbara's mother's brother and her host at Marvis Bay.

"Your uncle?"

"His name is Tuttle. Have you met him?"

"Oh, yes. I've seen a good deal of him. He has got a friend staying with him," said Ferdinand, his mind returning to the matter nearest his heart. "A fellow named Parsloe."

"Oh, is George Parsloe here? How jolly!"

"Do you know him?" barked Ferdinand, hollowly. He would not have supposed that anything could have added to his existing depression, but he was conscious now of having slipped a few rungs farther down the ladder of gloom. There had been a horribly joyful ring in her voice. Ah, well, he reflected

morosely, how like Life it all was! We never know what the morrow may bring forth. We strike a good patch and are beginning to think pretty well of ourselves, and along comes a George Parsloe.

"Of course I do," said Barbara. "Why, there he is."

The cab had drawn up at the door of the hotel, and on the porch George Parsloe was airing his graceful person. To Ferdinand's fevered eye he looked like a Greek god, and his inferiority complex began to exhibit symptoms of elephantiasis. How could he compete at love or golf with a fellow who looked as if he had stepped out of the movies and considered himself off his drive when he did a hundred and eighty yards?

"Geor-gee!" cried Barbara, blithely. "Hullo, George!"

"Why, hullo, Barbara!"

They fell into pleasant conversation, while Ferdinand hung miserably about in the offing. And presently, feeling that his society was not essential to their happiness, he slunk away.

GEORGE PARSLOE dined at the Cat-Stroker's table that night, and it was with George Parsloe that Barbara roamed in the moonlight after dinner. Ferdinand, after a profitless hour at the billiard-table, went early to his room. But not even the rays of the moon, glinting on his cup, could soothe the fever in his soul. He practised putting sombrely into his tooth-glass for a while; then, going to bed, fell at last into a troubled sleep.

BARBARA slept late the next morning and breakfasted in her room. Coming down towards noon, she found a strange emptiness in the hotel. It was her experience of summer hotels that a really fine day like this one was the cue for half the inhabitants to collect in the lounge, shut all the windows, and talk about conditions in the jute industry. To her surprise, though the sun was streaming down from a cloudless sky, the only occupant of the lounge was the octogenarian with the ear-trumpet. She observed that he was chuckling to himself in a senile manner.

"Good morning," she said, politely, for she had made his acquaintance on the previous evening.

"Hey?" said the octogenarian, suspending his chuckling and getting his trumpet into position.

"I said 'Good morning!'" roared Barbara into the receiver.

"Hey?"

"Good morning!"

"Ah! Yes, it's a very fine morning, a very fine morning. If it wasn't for missing my bun and glass of milk at twelve sharp," said the octogenarian, "I'd be down on the links. That's where I'd be, down on the links. If it wasn't for missing my bun and glass of milk."

This refreshment arriving at this moment, he dismantled the radio outfit and began to restore his tissues.

"Watching the match," he explained, pausing for a moment in his bun-mangling.

"What match?"

The octogenarian sipped his milk.

"What match?" repeated Barbara.

"Hey?"

"What match?"

The octogenarian began to chuckle again and nearly swallowed a crumb the wrong way.

"Take some of the conceit out of him," he gurgled.

"Out of who?" asked Barbara, knowing perfectly well that she should have said "whom."

"Yes," said the octogenarian.

"Who is conceited?"

"Ah! This young fellow, Dibble. Very conceited. I saw it in his eye from the first, but nobody would listen to me. Mark my words, I said, that boy needs taking down a peg or two. Well, he's going to be this morning. Your uncle wired to young Parsloe to come down, and he's arranged a match between them. Dibble——"—here the octogenarian choked again and had to rinse himself out with milk—"Dibble doesn't know that Parsloe once went round in ninety-four!"

"What?"

Everything seemed to go black to Barbara. Through a murky mist she appeared to be looking at a negro octogenarian sipping ink. Then her eyes cleared, and she found herself clutching for support at the back of a chair. She understood now. She realized why Ferdinand had been so distrait, and her whole heart went out to him in a spasm of maternal pity. How she had wronged him!

"Take some of the conceit out of him," the octogenarian was mumbling, and Barbara felt a sudden sharp loathing for the old man. For two pins she could have dropped a beetle in his milk. Then the need for action roused her. What action? She did not know. All she knew was that she must act.

"Oh!" she cried.

"Hey?" said the octogenarian, bringing his trumpet to the ready.

But Barbara had gone.

IT was not far to the links, and Barbara covered the distance on flying feet. She reached the club-house, but the course was empty except for the Scooper, who was

preparing to drive off the first tee. In spite of the fact that something seemed to tell her subconsciously that this was one of the sights she ought not to miss, the girl did not wait to watch. Assuming that the match had started soon after breakfast, it must by now have reached one of the holes on the second nine. She ran down the hill, looking to left and right, and was presently aware of a group of spectators clustered about a green in the distance. As she hurried towards them they moved away, and now she could see Ferdinand advancing to the next tee. With a thrill that shook her whole body she realized that he had the honour. So he must have won one hole, at any rate. Then she saw her uncle.

"How are they?" she gasped.

Mr. Tuttle seemed moody. It was apparent that things were not going altogether to his liking.

'All square at the fifteenth," he replied gloomily.

"All square!"

"Yes. Young Parsloe," said Mr. Tuttle, with a sour look in the direction of that lissom athlete, "doesn't seem to be able to do a thing right on the greens. He has been putting like a sheep with the botts."

FROM the foregoing remark of Mr. Tuttle you will no doubt have gleaned at least a clue to the mystery of how Ferdinand Dibble had managed to hold his long-driving adversary up to the fifteenth green, but for all that you will probably consider that some further explanation of this amazing state of affairs is required. Mere bad putting on the part of George Parsloe is not, you feel, sufficient to cover the matter entirely. You are right. There was another very important factor in the situation—to wit, that by some extraordinary chance Ferdinand Dibble had started right off from the first tee playing the game of a lifetime. Never had he made such drives, never chipped his chips so shrewdly.

About Ferdinand's driving there was as a general thing a fatal stiffness and over-caution which prevented success. And

"I said 'Good morning!'" roared Barbara into the receiver.
"Hey?"

with his chip-shots he rarely achieved accuracy owing to his habit of rearing his head like the lion of the jungle just before the club struck the ball. But to-day he had been swinging with a careless freedom and his chips had been true and clean. The thing had puzzled him all the way round. It had not elated him, for, owing to Barbara's aloofness and the way in which she had gambolled about George Parsloe like a young lamb in the springtime, he was in too deep a state of dejection to be elated by anything. And now, suddenly, in a flash of clear vision, he perceived the reason why he had been playing so well to-day. It was just because he was not elated. It was simply because he was so profoundly miserable.

That was what Ferdinand told himself as he stepped off the sixteenth after hitting a screamer down the centre of the fairway, and I am convinced that he was right. Like so many indifferent golfers, Ferdinand Dibble had always made the game hard for himself by thinking too much. He was a deep student of the works of the masters, and whenever he prepared to play a stroke he had a complete mental list of all the mistakes which it was possible to make. He would remember how Taylor had warned against dipping the right shoulder, how Vardon had inveighed against any movement of the head ; he would recall how Ray had mentioned the tendency to snatch back the club, how Braid had spoken sadly of those who sin against their better selves by stiffening the muscles and heaving.

The consequence was that when, after waggling in a frozen manner till mere shame urged him to take some definite course of action, he eventually swung, he invariably proceeded to dip his right shoulder, stiffen his muscles, heave, and snatch back the club, at the same time raising his head sharply as in the illustrated plate (Some Frequent Faults of Beginners—No. 3, Lifting the Bean) facing page thirty-four of James Braid's " Golf Without Tears." To-day he had been so preoccupied with his broken heart that he had made his shots absently, almost carelessly, with the result that at least one in every three had been a lallapaloosa.

Meanwhile, George Parsloe had driven off and the match was progressing. George was feeling a little flustered by now. He had been given to understand that this bird Dibble was a hundred-at-his-best man, and all the way round the fellow had been reeling off fives in great profusion and had once actually got a four. True, there had been an occasional six, and even a seven, but that did not alter the main fact that the man was making the dickens of a game of it. With the haughty spirit of one who had once done a ninety-four, George Parsloe had anticipated being at least three up at the turn. Instead of which he had been two down and had had to fight strenuously to draw level.

Nevertheless, he drove steadily and well, and would certainly have won the hole had it not been for his weak and sinful putting. The same defect caused him to halve the seventeenth after being on in two, with Ferdinand wandering in the desert and only reaching the green with his fourth. Then, however, Ferdinand holed out from a distance of seven yards, getting a five, which George's three putts just enabled him to equal.

BARBARA had watched the proceedings with a beating heart. At first she had looked on from afar ; but now, drawn as by a magnet, she approached the tee. Ferdinand was driving off. She held her breath. Ferdinand held his breath. And all around one could see their respective breaths being held by George Parsloe, Mr. Tuttle, and the enthralled crowd of spectators. It was a moment of the acutest tension, and it was broken by the crack of Ferdinand's driver as it met the ball and sent it hopping along the ground for a mere thirty yards. At this supreme crisis in the match Ferdinand Dibble had topped.

George Parsloe teed up his ball. There was a smile of quiet satisfaction on his face. He snuggled the driver in his hands and gave it a preliminary swish. This, felt George Parsloe, was where the happy ending came. He would drive as he had never driven before. He would so drive that it would take his opponent at least three shots to catch up with him. He drew back his club with infinite caution, poised it at the top of the swing——

" I always wonder——" said a clear girlish voice, ripping the silence like the explosion of a bomb.

George Parsloe started. His club wobbled. It descended. The ball trickled into the long grass in front of the tee. There was a grim pause.

" You were saying, Miss Medway——" said George Parsloe, in a small, flat voice.

" Oh, I'm so sorry," said Barbara. " I'm afraid I put you off."

" A little, perhaps. Possibly the merest trifle. But you were saying you wondered about something. Can I be of any assistance ? "

" I was only saying," said Barbara, " that I always wonder why tees are called tees."

George Parsloe swallowed once or twice. He also blinked a little feverishly. His eyes had a dazed, staring expression.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Barbara. "I'm afraid I put you off. I was only saying that I always wonder why tees are called tees."

"I am afraid I cannot tell you off-hand," he said. "But I will make a point of consulting some good encyclopædia at the earliest opportunity."

"Thank you so much."

"Not at all. It will be a pleasure. In case you were thinking of inquiring at the moment when I am putting why greens are called greens, may I venture the suggestion now that it is because they are green?"

And, so saying, George Parsloe stalked to his ball and found it nestling in the heart of some shrub of which, not being a botanist, I cannot give you the name. It was a

close-knit, adhesive shrub, and it twined its tentacles so lovingly around George Parsloe's niblick that he missed his first shot altogether. His second made the ball rock, and his third dislodged it. Playing a full swing with his brassie and being by now a mere cauldron of seething emotions, he missed his fourth. His fifth came to within a few inches of Ferdinand's drive, and he picked it up and hurled it from him into the rough as if it had been something venomous.

"Your hole and match," said George Parsloe, thinly.

FERDINAND DIBBLE sat beside the glittering ocean. He had hurried off the course with swift strides the moment George Parsloe had spoken those bitter words. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

They were mixed thoughts. For a moment joy at the reflection that he had won a tough match came irresistibly to the surface, only to sink again as he remembered that life, whatever its triumphs, could hold nothing for him now that Barbara Medway loved another.

"Mr. Dibble!"

He looked up. She was standing at his side. He gulped and rose to his feet.

"Yes?"

There was a silence.

"Doesn't the sun look pretty on the water?" said Barbara.

Ferdinand groaned. This was too much.

"Leave me," he said, hollowly. "Go back to your Parsloe, the man with whom you walked in the moonlight beside this same water."

"Well, why shouldn't I walk with Mr. Parsloe in the moonlight beside this same water?" demanded Barbara, with spirit.

"I never said," replied Ferdinand, for he was a fair man at heart, "that you shouldn't walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water. I simply said you did walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water. And what I mean is, go back to him."

"I've a perfect right to walk with Mr. Parsloe beside this same water," persisted Barbara. "He and I are old friends."

Ferdinand groaned again.

"Exactly! There you are! As I suspected. Old friends! Played together as children and what not, I shouldn't wonder."

"No, we didn't. I've only known him five years. But he is engaged to be married to my greatest chum, so that draws us together."

Ferdinand uttered a strangled cry.

"Parsloe engaged to be married!"

"Yes. The wedding takes place next month."

"But look here." Ferdinand's forehead was wrinkled. He was thinking tensely. "Look here," said Ferdinand, a close reasoner; "if Parsloe's engaged to your greatest chum, he can't be in love with *you*."

"No."

"And you aren't in love with him?"

"No."

"Then, by gad," said Ferdinand, "how about it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Will you marry me?" bellowed Ferdinand.

"Yes."

"You will?"

"Of course I will."

"Darling!" cried Ferdinand.

"THERE is only one thing that bothers me a bit," said Ferdinand, thoughtfully, as they strolled together over the scented meadows, while in the trees above them a thousand birds trilled Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

"What is that?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said Ferdinand. "The fact is, I've just discovered the great secret of golf. You can't play a really hot game unless you're so miserable that you don't worry over your shots. Take the case of a chip-shot, for instance. If you're really wretched, you don't care where the ball is going and so you don't raise your head to see. Grief automatically prevents pressing and over-swinging. Look at the top-notchers. Have you ever seen a happy pro?"

"No. I don't think I have."

"Well, then!"

"But pros are all Scotsmen," argued Barbara.

"It doesn't matter. I'm sure I'm right. And the darned thing is that I'm going to be so infernally happy all the rest of my life that I suppose my handicap will go up to thirty or something."

Barbara squeezed his hand lovingly.

"Don't worry, precious," she said, soothingly. "It will be all right. I am a woman, and, once we are married, I shall be able to think of at least a hundred ways of snootering you to such an extent that you'll be fit to win the Amateur Championship."

"You will?" said Ferdinand, anxiously. "You're sure?"

"Quite, quite sure, dearest," said Barbara.

"My angel!" said Ferdinand.

He folded her in his arms, using the interlocking grip.

Photo. Mary Dale Clark.

HUGH WALPOLE

AN INTERVIEW

BY

GLADYS BEATTIE CROZIER

WITH Mr. Hugh Walpole as with so many other men of literary genius, his love of books and eagerness for story-telling showed itself early. Directly he could read he started to devour every tale he could lay hands on. Almost all his pocket money went on books, and, as a very little lad, the gift of a complete set of the Waverley Novels gave him the keenest pleasure.

His gift for story-telling first came to light at school, where he was on one occasion discovered relating some specially thrilling tale, "made up out of his head," to a fascinated audience of eager little boys in the dormitory at two a.m.! At home, during the holidays, his younger brother and sister were constantly regaled by some absorbing history of adventure, and he also wrote long stories constantly. Several of these are still preserved in some numbers of a "Christmas Miscellany" chiefly written by himself, containing long and short stories, poems, and articles, two in one number being on such ambitious subjects as "The Literary Aspect of 1902" and "The Glories of Literature"!

The elder son of the present Bishop of Edinburgh, and a descendant of Horace Walpole, Mr. Hugh Walpole was born some thirty-eight years ago in New Zealand, and, although he and his parents left soon after he was three years old, he still has a vivid recollection of his father coming down to breakfast one morning in a state of considerable agitation, news having just reached him that a volcanic mountain near their home was in a state of active eruption,

Hugh Walpole as baby—

and that the famous Pink Terraces, a well-known landmark of lava construction, had just been totally destroyed.

Educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he took History — after one or two "orientations" to see in which quarter of the compass his real talent lay for making a name—he came up to London at the age of twenty-three with the manuscript of a novel in his bag, and, as he says, "precious little else," determined to carve out a career.

Mr. Walpole was certainly born with a good firm grip on the illusive skirts of "happy chance," upon which, despite various sharp knocks and buffets, he has always managed to keep hold, for whenever in his early days he was just about "down and out" something always turned up.

His story of his first chance is enthralling. "Ensconcing myself in cheap lodgings in Chelsea, I prepared to look round for suitable work. I had just one London acquaintance likely to be of use—the late S. H. Jeyes, sub-editor of the *Standard*, whom I had met the summer before, at tea, down in Cornwall. He had asked me to call should I happen to be in town, so I wrote, and received a prompt reply asking me to go to see him. After a desultory chat, mostly on books, he invited me to a literary luncheon party, which proved to be the starting-point of my career.

schoolboy—

"During the luncheon someone mentioned a new novel and asked the name of the author and publisher, which, by luck, no one but myself knew. From this the talk turned on modern fiction—a subject on which I was particularly keen. I talked, I remember, for all I was worth, hoping to impress Jeyes—with unexpectedly successful results, for, drawing me aside as the other guests were taking their departure, he told me that the regular fiction reviewer for the *Standard* had fallen ill, and asked if I would care to try my hand at reviewing a few novels.

"I jumped at the suggestion, and carried off an armful of new books to my lodgings at Chelsea. Setting to work, after infinite pains I got the reviews done, and, reading them over, decided that they were very bad.

"Quite in despair, for I had done my best, I stuffed them into my pocket and wandered down to the British Museum Reading Room—a favourite haunt—where the first person I ran into chanced to be a woman friend who I knew also did a little writing. In my extremity I urged her to come and have tea in the gloomy Museum Tea Room, while I inflicted my reviews upon her and begged for her criticism and advice. She listened patiently, and when I had done said, gravely: 'Yes, they *are* awful!' at which confirmation of my fears I was terribly distressed.

"She said what she could to comfort me, following up with some excellent advice: 'Go home, take a nap, then light a cigarette and sit over the fire and re-write your reviews quite naturally—as though you were describing some books you've just read to a friend.'

"I did so, re-wrote the reviews, which were accepted, and another batch of novels sent, and it finally ended in my being given the post of regular fiction reviewer to the *Standard* at a fixed yearly salary.

"This post I kept for four years, writing novels in my spare time, until my income justified my giving up a form of work which is, I think, very bad for a novelist. I would advise all new recruits to 'cut' reviewing as soon as they possibly can. Naturally, a novelist has every right to review a brother writer's novel, provided he signs his name, thus making it clear that he is merely expressing his own individual opinion. A novelist is likely to have far too many prejudices to make an unbiased critic of fiction, and this makes it rather unfair for him to write unsigned reviews.

"I think," continued Mr. Walpole, "that writers should pay as little attention as they possibly can to praise or blame. If they are going to be any use at all they *must* follow their own individual course, and, though they should *listen* to what people say, they should never alter their course because of adverse criticism, or let praise turn their heads.

"Once, I remember, in my very early days, a wise old lady who had chanced to find me puzzling over a batch of contradictory reviews shrewdly remarked: 'Don't worry! Your book is *certainly* not so good as those who praise it say, and *probably* not so bad as those who blame it say!'

and young man.

Photo.] [*A. E. Smith.*

MR. HUGH WALPOLE IN HIS LIBRARY.

Mr. Walpole is an immense admirer of Sir Walter Scott, of whom three portraits may be seen over the fireplace, while the bookcase contains first editions of his works and of every book of note written concerning him.

—a piece of bracing consolation in which that word 'probably' struck rather coldly, I remember, on my ear.

"Novelists," continued Mr. Walpole, "and perhaps all readers of fiction, get to like one special type of novel, to the exclusion of all other kinds—but there isn't one perfect type of novel. At the moment critics are inclined to praise exclusively the very realistic novel, but the purely romantic novel has had a wonderful day in the past—indeed, until quite lately—and will certainly have a wonderful day again, most probably in the near future.

"A bad psychological story is so much worse than a bad adventure story—really there's nothing so awful! The only thing that matters is that a novel should be good of its kind.

"When did I first start writing? Why, I've always scribbled from the time that I could read, though most people thought it a great waste of my time.

"I suppose that my actual working hours are about three hours daily, but, of course,

I am thinking out the book I have on hand most of the other time. I like to get it all clearly thought out in my head before I start to write it down."

In the last dozen years or so, despite the long interruption which the war entailed, Mr. Hugh Walpole has managed to get through an amazing amount of work, for more than a dozen novels and romances, including "Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill," "Fortitude," "The Duchess of Wrexe," "The Prelude to Adventure," together with "Jeremy," "The Green Mirror," "The Cathedral," and those two remarkable stories of Russian life, "The Dark Forest" and "The Secret City," stand to his credit, besides a most interesting monograph on Joseph Conrad, for whose work he has an immense admiration, and innumerable articles and short stories, written for the magazines and reviews, both here and in America.

"Which do you consider your best piece of work?" I inquired.

"I think, on the whole, 'The Green Mirror,' and that, too, is my favourite book," replied Mr. Walpole, "though the character of 'Maggie' in 'The Captives' is my favourite individual character, and the one on which I have expended the greatest thought and care.

"No, my characters are nowadays drawn solely from my imagination. Only once have I drawn people from those I have met. It was in my early days, when I was very young, and I regret doing it. It's bad art and bad manners," declared Mr. Walpole, emphatically.

"You make an exception of 'Jeremy,' of course?" I asked.

"I must admit that much of that is autobiography," he confessed, cheerfully.

APROPOS of his very successful lecturing tours in America, Mr. Walpole tells several amusing stories.

"At the very beginning of one of my tours I travelled a long distance to a rather out-of-the-way spot to give the second lecture on my list at an American Social Club. On arrival on the platform, feeling rather nervous, for I had done little lecturing before, the chairman, a local minister, opened the proceedings by making a short speech, exhorting the members present to subscribe generously to the new session and leave no stone unturned to collect the funds upon which the success of the forthcoming lecture season must depend, winding up his exhortation with the remark: 'If we had only had more money we could have had an even better lecturer than we have here to-night!' as he turned to introduce me to my audience!"

On another occasion an amusing incident occurred at a small town in the neighbourhood of San Francisco, when, after a three-days' journey, Mr. Hugh Walpole, very brisk and smiling, and well prepared for the usual reception committee of women, who would, he knew, in accordance with the usual hospitable plan, be drawn up on the platform to greet him, prepared to step out of the train.

Just as he was about to alight, a cadaverous-looking old man—by no means clean, with bent shoulders, and a thatch of untidy white hair clinging in wisps about his ears—stumbled out of the train before him and almost into the arms of the assembled ladies, who welcomed him with the keenest enthusiasm.

His urgent refutations regarding his supposed identity were received with brisk disbelief. "Not Mr. Walpole? You *must* be Mr. Walpole!" he heard the leader firmly remark, and decided it was time to step forward and introduce himself—only to be met with an unbelieving stare, while the spokeswoman of the deputation, clearly voicing the general opinion, remarked with scorn: "*You?* You never wrote those books!"

When I met Mr. Hugh Walpole, he was living in a house in York Terrace, overlooking Regent's Park. It had a homelike look, with its big jars of flowers, a blazing fire, flanked by great saddle-bagged armchairs, and a charmingly-appointed teatable; his library was a most cheery and supremely comfortable setting for a chat on a cold winter day.

There is much originality in the decorations, which strike a pleasing and somewhat Russian note, with their emphasis on harmoniously-blended shades of deep blue and red, in the woven rugs which adorn the black-painted floor; curtains of deep Russian blue brocade make a gorgeous splash of colour, and lamp-shades and cushions are of shot red and blue silk. The ceiling is painted a very bright vivid blue.

The whole wall space is covered by tall, ivory-painted bookshelves, which completely surround the room and stand eight or ten feet high.

The centre of the library is occupied by Mr. Walpole's huge writing table, adorned with a quantity of signed and framed photographs, amongst which a couple of good portraits of Joseph Conrad, one of Arnold Bennett, and one of Chaliapine catch the eye.

Here Mr. Walpole keeps his specially rare books—two volumes of the first edition of "Robinson Crusoe," a specially fine first edition of Keats's "Endymion," and Charlotte Brontë's first story—written when

a child in minute characters on dolls' note-paper—enclosed in a wee leather case. Also the Italian grammar used by her as a girl, which bears her name upon the flyleaf.

An autograph copy of "Guinevere" given by William Morris to Burne-Jones, with a note in the poet's handwriting upon the title-page, is another special treasure.

Mr. Walpole is an immense admirer of Sir Walter Scott. He devoured all the Waverley Novels directly he could read—his favourite is still "Redgauntlet"—and his enthusiasm and affection for the great writer remain unbounded. Sir Walter's life-sized portrait in oils strikes a dominant note over the library mantelpiece, flanked by a tall bookcase devoted to first editions of all Scott's works, and of every book of note written concerning him. The portrait was painted by McFie after Raeburn, and a fine mezzotint of the Raeburn portrait stands on the mantelpiece, beside a coloured crayon drawing by Sir David Wilkie, which shows Sir Walter Scott in his later days, wearing a night-cap, with a plaid wrapped round his shoulders, sitting propped up in a high-backed easy-chair.

Just as Mr. Walpole was about to alight, a cadaverous-looking old man stumbled out before him and almost into the arms of the assembled ladies, who welcomed him with the keenest enthusiasm.

Other relics and souvenirs are scattered about the room; the embroidered wool-work slippers worn by Sir Walter up to the time of his death are enshrined in a glass case, while his death-mask, cast in bronze, lies on the writing-table.

By a most fortunate coincidence, Mr. Walpole, when in San Francisco during one of his recent lecturing tours, chancing to roam into an old bookshop, ran across seventy unknown and unpublished letters of Sir Walter Scott's, written by him to his solicitor at the time of his financial smash. He learnt that they had been brought in by the grandson or granddaughter of the solicitor a day or two before, and promptly bought them. Now, mounted in a magnificently bound red morocco book, each one on a separate page, with a carefully transcribed typewritten copy opposite, they form the greatest treasure in the library.

None of the letters has been written about or seen, and it is with special pleasure that I obtained permission to copy one of the most interesting of the shorter letters for the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Written just after the crash, it runs as follows:—

My dear sir,

I have this morning the very unpleasant news that Constable's house must stop payment, by which I will be greatly embarrassed.

At the same time I have so many hypothecs upon my works done and to be done, that I hope I may work through without great ultimate loss.

Mr. Hogarth, who manages the matters of Ballantyne and Co. and knows the whole affairs personally, will explain them to you.

Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

Abbotsford,

Tues. 17th January, 1826.

Glancing at random through this most fascinating volume one is struck by the picturesque felicity of phrase which runs through even his business correspondence, as, for instance, in the letter to his solicitor's partner, whom he has lately recommended to the Duke of Buccleuch as business agent for some of his affairs. "A thread delicately handled has been the means of pulling up a cable," remarks Sir Walter, shrewdly, going on to add: "And I would fain think that this partial but confidential employment may lead to something better hereafter."

"All my serious book-collecting has been done during the last seven years," remarked Mr. Walpole, "and I am also collecting autograph letters of famous literary men and women—Robert Browning, FitzGerald, Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Trollope, Dr. Johnson, and Charles Lamb are amongst them."

A very special feature of Mr. Walpole's library is his collection of the great novelists, many first editions and in the original bindings, which range from John Bunyan (not a first edition!) to Joseph Conrad, Thomas Hardy, and Rudyard Kipling. It fills the entire side of one long wall. Most of the volumes are extremely rare, and the whole forms a most compact and probably unique collection, and an invaluable reference library on a subject on which Mr. Walpole is so often asked to lecture—English fiction.

Here one notices a shelf and a half devoted to Thackeray, a long row of George Eliot—including "Daniel Deronda" in the first paper-covered edition—Meredith, Whyte-Melville, Kingsley, and half a shelf of George Gissing—including "The Unclassed" and "New Grub Street." There is a specially fine collection of Anthony Trollope, including "Can You Forgive Her?" and "The Last Chronicle of Barset," and one must not overlook those two delightful books of humour, "Works," by Max Beerbohm, and "The Trials of the Bantocks," by G. S. Street.

"I TAKE a great interest in trials," said Mr. Walpole, cheerfully, pointing out another bookcase in which a couple of shelves are devoted to various chronicles of crime and learned dissections of the motives which inspired them, which must always have a special fascination for the student of human nature. "The Trial of the Seddons" and "Crippen," edited by Filson Young; "The Trial of Eugene Aram," by E. R. Watson, and a whole edition of "Notable Scottish Trials" are included, while on another shelf I noted a couple of beautifully bound volumes with the gruesome title, "The Confessions of a Thug"!

Another shelf is devoted to books on the Great War, while just below is a magnificent edition of Horace Walpole's Letters bound in brown leather. A whole bookcase is devoted to modern French, Scandinavian, Russian, and Italian writers.

On the right-hand side of the fireplace are rows of shelves devoted to the poets. Here again the same catholic taste prevails in the wide choice, which ranges from plays by Ben Jonson and the poems of Keats, Browning, and Swinburne, and "The Ingoldsby Legends," to slim volumes of verse by Walter De La Mare and plays and poems by John Drinkwater.

Mr. Walpole's account of his first meeting, at the outset of his career, with Thomas Hardy is amusing.

"A friend of mine who knew the Hardys well," he said, "offered to take me there to tea.

"I accepted the invitation with alacrity, and on arrival was duly introduced to the great man and the late Mrs. Hardy—his first wife—who, entering into conversation with my sponsor, left me and Thomas Hardy to sit and gaze at one another. This we proceeded to do, my host not apparently thinking any attempt at conversation necessary.

"At last, goaded into speech by the prolonged silence, I blurted out a remark upon the fineness of the weather. Mr. Hardy concurred in monosyllables, and silence reigned once more—broken presently by Mr. Hardy, who, rousing himself and asking my plans, learnt that I wanted to become a writer.

"'What kind of books do you propose to write?' he asked. 'I hope to write novels,' I replied. 'Don't!' advised Thomas Hardy, laconically, before relapsing once more into silence!"

ELGAR'S "DREAM OF GERONTIUS."

In an interview in our February issue Herr Kreisler, referring to Sir Edward Elgar, stated that he had been told that "The Dream of Gerontius" was "sold for a trifling sum—twenty pounds, I think it was." We are informed by Messrs. Novello & Co., Ltd., the publishers of the work, that Sir Edward Elgar received on the publication of his work an amount which, compared to twenty pounds, is a considerable sum; in addition thereto he is the owner of royalties payable on the sales effected during each year.

SENTENCE OF DEATH

BY

GLADYS ST JOHN-LOE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

"ARLINGTON! Well, I'm blowed!"

I swung round with a start, wondering who in the world was the stern-faced, grizzle-haired man who addressed me, who stood gripping me firmly by the arm in the middle of the Strand. Then, as his expression relaxed, as his lips puckered to a once familiar grin, recollection swept back over me.

"Mace, old man!" I exclaimed. "Well, of all the astonishing bits of luck!"

We turned into Romano's out of the chilly dampness of the November evening, and over a couple of drinks found ourselves slipping back into the old groove of friendship like a long-disused but perfectly-fitting bolt into its socket.

Mace had altered enormously since I'd seen him last. It wasn't exactly that he looked older, though as a matter of fact he did, far older than I should have expected; it was something more subtle than that, something I couldn't explain to myself by any actual physical alteration. It was rather—if you can understand what I mean—as though the spirit of the man had changed. In place of the frankly smiling, don't-care-a-damn-if-it-snows sort of expression with which I had always associated him, there brooded an air of shuttered, almost grim concentration, a look of bitterness, of disillusion—and of something else I couldn't define. While he was talking to me the effect disappeared in a great measure, but the moment he was silent and his features fell into repose it slipped back again like an obscuring mask.

"It *is* jolly—our running into one another like this!" I enthused, warmly. "Must

be—let's see—quite nine years ago—isn't it?—since that last week-end at Belchaise?"

He nodded.

"Nine years and four months, to be exact—the end of July, 1914."

"By Jove, of course. I remember! And a few days later war broke out and we were all swept away helter-skelter. By the way, I wonder what became of the others—Remington and Archie Wymis and—and—let's see—Stoddard and Berry Cleland—and Darracq? I've often wondered. Funny how one loses touch. Darracq was killed, of course. I read an account of that in the papers. Nice chap, Darracq. D'you remember the poetry he used to write? Yards and yards of it. And didn't Remington go out to Rhodesia or somewhere?"

"He did, but he's back again in London now. In fact, they're all in London at the present moment."

"Really? Good egg! And you've managed to keep in touch?"

"Well—lately. As a matter of fact I've been hunting 'em up. I came across Remington and Archie Wymis by accident, and then the idea occurred to me—I thought—some sort of a reunion—— You remember the jolly times we used to have together?"

"*Rather!* I should just think I do. And you've succeeded in rounding up the other two?"

"Yes. Cleland was easy. He's a partner in his father's firm—Cleland and Haverstock, the solicitors. Stoddard's a journalist of some sort—fearfully hard up, I believe. And now——" He tapped the ash from his cigarette, took a careful sip of his Bronx cocktail, and added: "Now Fate's stepped in and completed the circle."

The "Circle"—that was what we had called ourselves in the old days. I drew in a long musing breath and stared away across the almost deserted bar. The past swooped towards me like some shining bird, brushed my jaded spirit with the caressing wing of happy recollection. To recapture, even for an hour, the magic essence of those bygone days! To feel the warm urge of youth's enthusiasms surging anew through the calloused veins of disillusioned manhood! What would I not give for such an experience?

Before we parted company we had planned a dinner that was to bring all six of us together again.

WHEN I arrived at Mace Conway's flat in Jermyn Street at five-and-twenty minutes past seven in the evening, it was to find Remington and Stoddard already there. Shortly afterwards Cleland joined us, and at exactly one minute past the half-hour Archie Wymis sauntered airily in.

Dinner was announced by a Japanese man-servant, whom I recognized as having seen at Belchaise, and we passed from an attractive sitting-room, between large folding oak doors, into a dining-room beyond.

I suppose we were all feeling a trifle self-conscious, secretly readjusting ourselves, as it were, to an appropriate atmosphere of familiarity and good-fellowship. At any rate, to begin with, in spite of Mace's valiant efforts to put us at our ease, conversation flagged heavily and rather uncomfortably. I had come expecting a miracle, expecting to be swept back thirteen or fourteen years into the tingling atmosphere of dawning manhood, to feel precisely as I had felt during one of those jolly evenings in Mace's sitting-room at Oxford. And as I sat waiting for the miracle to happen, a chill sense of disappointment stole over me.

For one thing, with the exception of Archie Wymis—who was precisely his old trim, dark-haired, exquisitely groomed self—we all seemed to have changed so amazingly. It gave me quite a shock to discover that Remington's one-time genial plumpness had turned to uncompromising, rather vulgar fat, and that Stoddard—who had divided with Wymis the honours of a dandically neat appearance—wore shabby, ill-fitting clothes that looked as though they were never even brushed, and that his lean idealistic features were marked with the stamp of chronic discontent. Cleland's once slim figure had thickened and coarsened considerably, whilst a particularly unpleasant scar—the result, no doubt, of a war wound—ran diagonally across his left cheek. It began at the corner of the mouth and went zigzagging upwards to the eyebrow, dragging aside the lip in a rather horrible manner. And Berry Cleland had been the best-looking of us all! "Adonis" we had always called him. I shivered, wondering how I myself must look to them.

At the head of the table sat Mace, his smile of conventional politeness hardening again and again into that look of haunting bitterness. He, undoubtedly, was the most profoundly altered of us all. It was as though a stranger brooded behind the cold mask of his features, giving them a curiously unfamiliar aspect.

Fumblingly I sought about in my mind for some explanation of the change in him; and abruptly, like a key into the hand of a man standing before a locked door, came the memory of Philida. Why, of course—Philida! Poor old Mace! He'd thought the world of Phil. If ever a man had worshipped a woman——! It was to celebrate the first anniversary of their wedding that we'd all

been invited down to Belchaise that last week-end. Funny that even marriage hadn't succeeded in breaking up the "Circle"! We'd all prophesied that it would. "A woman always spoils a man for friendship," we'd told one another gloomily before the event. And the strange thing was that it hadn't seemed to make any difference.

Philida was lovely. I don't believe I've ever seen a more beautiful woman; but—well, somehow I never quite *liked* her. I didn't feel that she was good enough for Mace. Underneath her charming exterior I fancied her character had a certain shoddiness. And Mace adored her. The look that would come into his eyes every time they rested upon her! As though something within him were eternally upon his knees! And in the end she had left him—run away with some other man.

I shivered again as I heard him laugh—a peculiarly hard, mirthless sound. He had never laughed like that in the old days. The iron must indeed have entered into his soul, must have burnt like an acid into the very roots of his being.

The meal went on, to the accompaniment of a somewhat vague stream of small-talk. And then, little by little, as the effects of the very excellent food—combined with the various even more excellent wines—got to work within us, the atmosphere of the gathering began subtly to change. The ice first cracked, then broke generously in all directions, to be finally swept away upon a flood of animated loquacity. By the time the last course had been disposed of we were all thoroughly, even a trifle hilariously, at ease. Tongues wagged; anecdotes and reminiscences were bandied about with an ever-increasing liveliness. "D'you remember?" sounded again and again like a recurring *motif* in an opera score. For my own part, I had forgotten my initial disappointment. More and more surely, under the superimposed crust of the past nine years, I was rediscovering the well-remembered individualities of my five old friends.

Mace's reunion was proving a success after all.

WE went back through the folding oak doors into the sitting-room. It was a jolly sort of man's room—sprawling leather armchairs and bookshelves and well-worn rugs and tobacco jars and sporting prints on the snuff-coloured walls, and a great blazing log fire roaring upwards from a wide terra-cotta hearth—the sort of fire that made you glad to remember how cold it was outside.

We sat round in a careless semicircle, and Yamado, his flattish yellow face smiling its eternal smile of good-natured obsequiousness, came in with coffee on a tray. There was a slight lull in the conversation as he filled and handed a cup separately to each one of us. Then he went out again, and we sat meditatively sipping the strong black beverage and staring at the fire.

The talk went on. One by one we delved back into the past, retrieving some priceless half-forgotten memory of our common youth.

The pyramids of ash grew long on the ends of Mace's fine Havana cigars, scattered themselves unheeded upon the floor. A sense of blissful satisfaction, of inestimable well-being, settled over the whole party.

And then, inevitably, the talk gravitated to that last meeting at Belchaise, that critical week-end when the fate of all Europe had hung in the balance. And someone mentioned Philida.

I suppose, all along, the thought of her had been hovering teasingly in the background of our minds. I imagine I wasn't the only one who felt curious. But somehow—well, I suppose we hadn't liked to say anything—not until the name slipped out accidentally; and then we were all on the alert, watching Mace as a cat watches a mouse.

He had got up from his chair to fetch a box of matches from the mantelpiece, and now he turned and faced us, his back to the glowing logs, a dead match in one hand, a cigarette in the other. I saw that his lips wore their faint cynical smile.

"Philida?" he said, quietly, almost pensively. "Ah, yes—Philida! I wonder someone hasn't mentioned her before. No doubt you've wanted to—and didn't like to. 'Fraid of hurting my feelings and all that. Well, you needn't worry."

He tossed the burnt match into the grate, deliberately scrutinized each member of the "Circle" in turn, and went on:—

"I wonder—how much you've heard about that affair? I mean how much that's true? If you're interested, I'll tell you. I'd rather like you to know."

Instinctively I found myself saying:—

"But, Mace, old chap, you can't *want* to talk about it. We can all guess how cut-up you must have been and——"

He flashed me a quick probing look. I saw his nostrils quiver like the nostrils of a spirited horse. He was crushing the cigarette to pulp between his fingers.

"But I do, I *do* want to talk about it!" he cried, his voice rising to a sudden passionate insistence. "In fact, I—I've brought you all here this evening—for the express purpose of talking about it."

A ripple of surprise went round the party. There was an embarrassed clearing of throats, a shuffling of feet, then someone said:—

"Oh, well—if you want to. But we're

not—I mean, of course, we all know it wasn't *your* fault."

"Indeed?"

Again his glance seemed to challenge us, seemed to linger just a fraction of a moment upon each individual face. And as his eyes met mine, I was conscious of an odd thrill of foreboding.

"How can one judge," he said, "who is really to blame—in affairs of that sort? Women? They're the devil! I know there are men who say that all this talk about never being able to understand 'em is rot. Faugh! They've never tried—that's all. I tell you, you never *can* understand 'em—down to rock bottom."

He halted, became aware of the mangled cigarette between his fingers, and threw it impatiently into the grate.

"As for Phil—I thought I knew *her*. I thought I'd given her all a woman could want—that she was content. If loving her could have made her happy——" His voice broke, his lips twitched; he stared blankly upwards after a voluting curl of blue-grey smoke. "Damn it all, *you* know what a fool I was about that woman! If cutting my heart out of my living body could have saved her a moment's pain—— But it seems that wasn't what she wanted. No, there wasn't anything *I* could do. She'd just—got tired. I suppose I bored her, I was so darned simple, such a greenhorn. And I? Oh, my God, I loved her! You remember that last week-end? Even then—and we'd only been married a year—there was someone else. And then the war came—and that simplified matters. I hadn't been out in France three weeks before she left Belchaise for good and all. She sent me the usual sort of note, to the effect that she'd 'thought things over and come to the conclusion that our marriage was a mistake,' and that she'd gone away with 'the only man she'd ever really loved'—her 'soul-mate,' I think she called him."

He laughed, a harsh, ugly laugh, and helped himself to a fresh cigarette.

"I was in the trenches—helpless. It was eighteen months before I got my first leave, and by that time—well, what could I do that was any use? They'd covered their tracks very cleverly—and I don't know that I wanted, specially, to find out who the man was. I won't pretend that if I'd happened to come up against him in the beginning—that I wouldn't have killed him, gladly, with my two bare hands. But, after all, it was her choice—and if he'd treated her decently——"

He paused in the act of lighting the cigarette. The breath hissed between his teeth with a little whistling sound.

"If only he'd treated her decently! But he didn't. I found out afterwards he'd given her hell. *Hell!* He took her to Paris and then smuggled her down to Barcelona—that was in the early part of 1915. And when he was tired of her, he just left her—stranded, starving—and came back and joined up in the British Army. She died in 1917—without a penny, after sinking to the lowest depths of misery and shame any woman could sink to. After the Armistice I spent months looking for her. You see, I loved her. I'd never, somehow, been able to get her out of my mind. And at last I found her—all that was left of her."

HE was staring straight before him with a look I can't describe, a mad look, as though he were seeing things—horrible things. Then, with the ominous quiet of controlled passion, he went on:—

"As I stood by the filthy bed on which they told me she had died, as I looked at the nameless grave in which she'd been buried, I swore never to rest until I'd seen justice done to the man who had ruined her. Do you blame me?"

He stopped speaking and silence settled upon the room like a soft pedal upon the throbbing strings of a piano. The call of a newsboy crying a "special late edition" drifted thinly upwards from the street. Then, rather jerkily, Wymis said:—

"And the man—you found out who the man was?"

Mace shrugged.

"Not yet. It was extraordinary—the pains he must have taken to hide his name, just as if—— But he's in the net now. He can't escape." He held up his left hand, stared at it with a sudden peculiar intentness, and went on: "Has it ever occurred to you—what interesting things hands are? My only hope of discovering the man who ruined my happiness and murdered Philida—yes, murdered her!—lies in the fact that hands can't change, that they are a more certain means of identification even than faces. You don't understand? Let me explain. In the February of 1915 my man Yamado—who is extremely devoted to me—happened to be in Paris. And one day he was on the point of crossing a street when a block in the traffic caused a taxi to halt against the kerb immediately in front of him. In the taxi he caught a glimpse of a woman's face—Philida's. He tried to see the face of the man she was with, but this was impossible. Suddenly the man got up to open the window. His face was still invisible, but for several moments his hands rested in full view upon the frame of the open window. Well—Yamado happens to have a peculiarly infallible memory for hands. If he once, either consciously or

unconsciously, fixes the impression of a hand upon his memory, he never forgets it. We Europeans are apt to imagine that personality expresses itself only in the face. In the East, apparently, it's different. An Oriental realizes that a hand may be identified as surely as, perhaps more surely than, a face—that a hand can't be disguised as a face can. And—well, as I've told you, Yamado happens to have this gift of hand-memory supernormally developed."

I think it was Remington who said :—

" But how the deuce is that going to help you ? You can't have the hands of every man in the world paraded for Yamado's inspection."

Again Mace smiled his subtle cryptic smile.

" No, of course not. Besides, it isn't necessary. You see, I happen to know that the hands Yamado saw in Paris belong to one of five men."

" One of five ? "

" Yes. He recognized them as belonging to one of the guests he had waited upon at table during that week-end at Belchaise."

" But—you mean to say—— ? "

" There were six of you present on that occasion, but as Darracq happened to be killed two days before Yamado saw my wife in Paris—well, that puts him out of it."

For one ghastly frozen moment nobody spoke. Then :—

" Good God ! " Stoddard exclaimed. " You accuse one of *us ?* You must be crazy. You don't know what you're talking about."

WITH an elaborate gesture of nonchalance Mace put his cigarette to his lips, inhaled a lungful of smoke, and blew it in graceful spirals towards the ceiling.

" I know perfectly well what I'm talking about. I'm saying that the man who ruined my life's happiness, who took Phil away from me—and finally left her to die like a dog in a Spanish hovel—is in this room at the present moment."

The ring of passionate conviction in his voice left no doubt in my mind that he believed himself to be speaking the truth. I felt the hair prickle about the edges of my scalp. The palms of my hands were clammy with sweat.

" But—but, Mace, damn it all ! " I blustered, " that's a pretty rotten statement to make, unless you're positive—and how *can* you be—on such evidence ? "

" I'm quite satisfied that Yamado made no mistake."

" Then—for God's sake, man—which one of us was it ? *Which ?* "

Again he drew at his cigarette and again the smoke swirled airily, maddeningly, upwards. He shook his head.

" I don't know."

" You don't—*know ?* "

" No. Before you came I arranged with Yamado that if, while waiting at table, he recognized the hands he saw in Paris, he was to give me a certain sign. He gave me that sign the last time he came into the room. But I still don't know—*which.*"

" Then what are you going to do ? "

I was convinced, now, that he was mad. Every bit of the old Mace had vanished. His voice was uncannily quiet as he replied :—

" What I intended to do—I have already done. I'm merely waiting for it to take effect."

" To—to take effect ? "

" Good Lord, man, wh-what d'you mean ? "

" Mace—for Heaven's sake—— ! "

" Must be some mistake. You know perfectly well, old man—— "

" One of *us ?* "

" Can't you *explain ?* "

We were all talking at once now, wildly, frantically, afraid without knowing what it was that we feared. And he nodded, smiling his baffling smile, as he answered :—

" Yes, I'll explain. It was arranged that when Yamado brought in the coffee he should hand each of you a cup separately—and that the cup that went to the man whose hands he recognized—should be poisoned."

" *Poisoned !* "

A thrill of pure horror swept round the " Circle " like the cold blade of a scythe.

" But, Conway—you must be mad ! "

" Mad ? Well, perhaps. Maybe you'd be mad also if you'd loved a woman as I loved my wife, and some man had done to her—what one of you did to Phil."

" But—poison ? "

" Yes, a very subtle Eastern poison, one which Yamado assures me is often used on similar occasions in China—a poison which produces no marked symptoms beyond a—well, perhaps a mild feeling of nausea, but which causes certain death within an hour of being swallowed." He pushed back his cuff, looked at his wrist-watch, and added : " It's now—let me see—exactly fifty-three minutes since the coffee was served. Another seven and I shall know positively—which one of you it was."

He dropped his arm to his side. His tall, straight figure reared itself stiffly against the mantelpiece, partly shutting off the glowing redness of the smouldering logs. My heart seemed to stand quite still as I looked at him. A sensation of actual physical sickness was beginning to crawl about in the pit of my stomach. The sounds of rumbling traffic in the street outside, the blare of

a motor-horn, the grind of hurriedly-applied brakes, seemed infinitely remote, irrelevant, like sounds filtering through a nightmare.

With an immense effort of the will I dragged my gaze away from Mace and stared round at the other four.

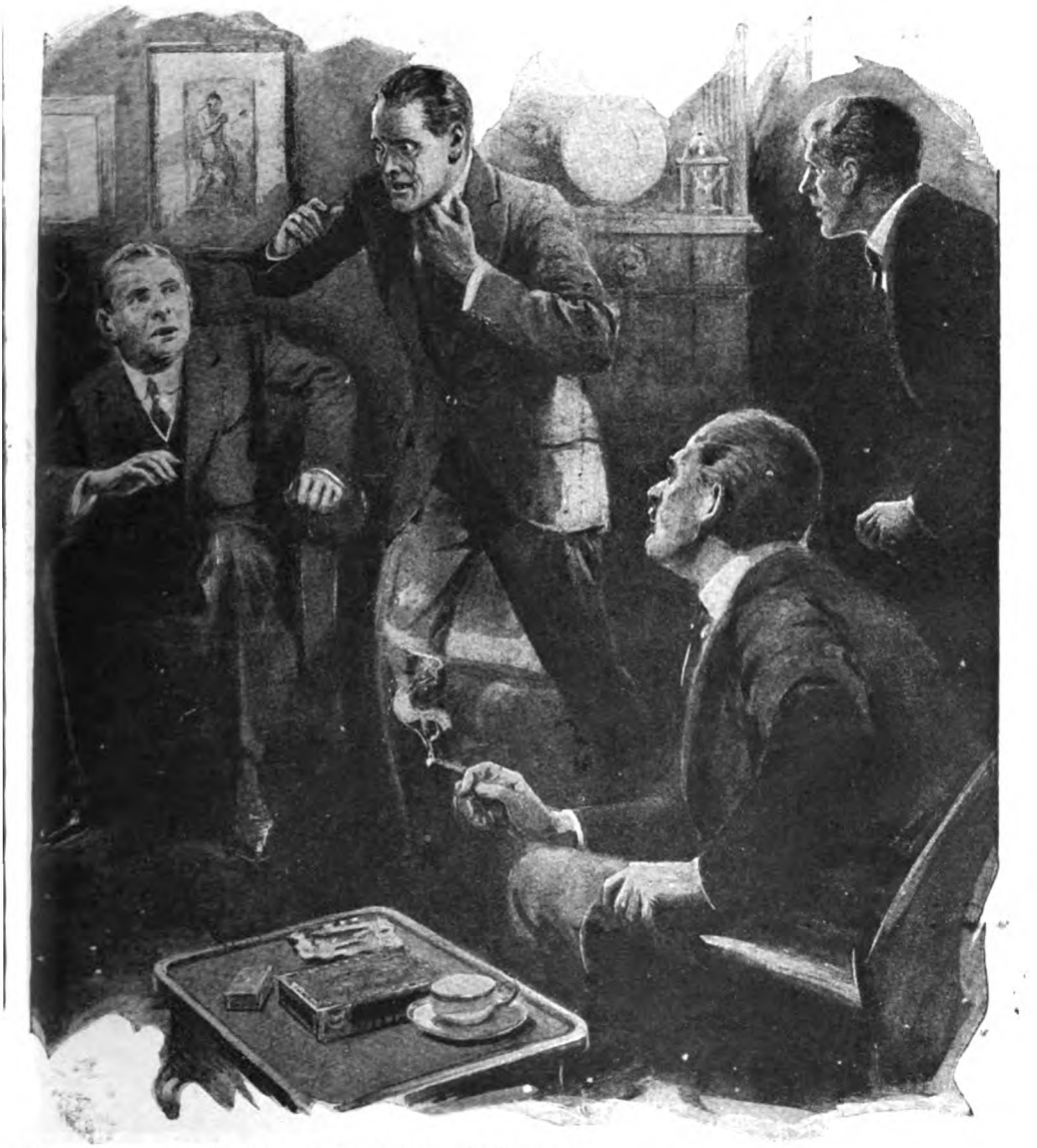
Wymis was white to the lips. His mouth hung open in a stupid, surprised sort of way, as if someone had just struck him a stunning blow between his eyes. Remington's flushed face had turned a violent bruised-looking purple. His big plump hands looked like flabby lumps of clay as they clasped the ends of his chair-arms. Stoddard, a piece of lank hair straying untidily down over his high forehead, was staring at Mace with an air of fascinated absorption, for all the world like some lean and hungry bloodhound on a leash. Was he thinking, I wonder, of the excellent "story" he would be able to concoct out of the affair? And exactly opposite me, his face clearly illumined by the glow of a crimson-shaded electric lamp, the scar on his cheek showing up like some horrid freshly-opened wound, sat Berry Cleland. His hands were pressed tightly between his knees. His shoulders sagged forward into a crouching attitude. His mouth, unintentionally contorted into a grimace by the dragging aside of the left corner of the upper lip, seemed to twitch and gibber in a frantic effort for self-control. And his eyes! Never in my life have I seen such an expression in any human face. It was like the crazy, panic-stricken look of a wild beast in a trap.

He stood swaying grotesquely before us,

He began to shiver. His body cringed lower and lower in its chair. A ghastly choking sound bubbled up out of his throat. And instantly every eye in the room was upon him.

How long we sat there, staring at him, overwhelmed with the cold horror of comprehension, I have no idea. I suppose, really, it couldn't have been more than a few seconds, though it seemed an interminable period of time. Somewhere, a long way off, I could hear a fire-bell ringing. And somewhere quite close at hand a clock was ticking—marking off the fatal moments as they slid one by one into eternity.

And then, abruptly, Cleland moved. He threw up his arms and staggered wildly to his feet. He stood swaying grotesquely before us, his face convulsed with a look of indescribable terror. Finally, with a strangling shriek, his knees gave way beneath him. He collapsed upon the hearthrug and lay still.



his face convulsed with a look of indescribable terror.

NOBODY moved or spoke. The ringing of the fire-bell died away in the distance. The ticking of the clock went on—tick-tock, tick-tock—regular, inevitable, maddening.

Someone knocked over a glass. It fell against the fender with a brittle smashing sound that broke effectively through the spell of inertia that possessed us.

With a brusque movement, like a dog shaking a wet coat, Mace pulled himself together and looked down at the crumpled thing at his feet.

"*You*—Cleland?" he said. "Well, I'm damned! And yet—I don't know that I'm surprised. You took a hell of a lot of getting here this evening. So you're the man Phil loved? Her 'soul-mate,' eh? Wonder what she'd think of you now—if she could see you?"

His voice was cold, indifferent, uncannily matter-of-fact. With a jerk I was on my feet, violently clutching at his arm and crying:—

"Mace! Mace! Good God, man, what have you done?"

He stared at me stupidly, his eyes blinking a little through the smoke.

"Done?"

"Yes—Cleland! Heavens, man, don't you realize——"

In a flash my professional instincts asserted themselves. Thrusting him hurriedly aside, I dropped to my knees beside Cleland's body.

A few moments' examination was sufficient to convince me that he was beyond all human aid.

"I don't know if you realize the seriousness of this business," I went on, as I rose awkwardly to my feet again. "Of course, you—you understand that he's dead?"

Mace nodded.

Someone else repeated:—

"*Dead?* You're quite sure? Hasn't—er—fainted or—or anything of that sort?"

I shook my head.

"No. Quite sure."

Again there was silence. We were all standing now, Mace imperturbably erect before the fireplace, the rest of us facing him across the still, dark form that had been Berry Cleland.

I think it was Stoddard who at last suggested:—

"Hadn't we better—I mean—isn't it usual—in a case of this sort, to—er—well, send for the police? Hang it all—bound to come out—simply bound to. No sense—messing things up."

And Mace himself answered:—

"Certainly. Ring up the police by all means. I believe Vine Street's the nearest. You'll find a telephone over there—and a directory in the middle drawer."

He pointed to a writing bureau standing against the wall between the two windows.

"But you realize, don't you, the consequences to yourself?" I urged, anxiously.

He shrugged.

"Why? What have I to fear?"

"But——! Listen, Mace—surely you realize that this is murder?"

He shook his head.

"Murder? Rubbish! Nothing of the sort. Simple justice—that's all."

"You may think so. I'm not going to argue that it isn't, but I'm afraid an English jury will take a different view of the matter."

"Jury? What's it got to do with a jury?"

"But—don't you see?—bound to be a trial?"

"Why?"

"Well, hang it all, you've deliberately poisoned a man."

"Poisoned? Nothing of the sort."

"But——"

"There was no poison in that coffee."

"*No poison?*"

"That's what I said. Look! There's a drop still left in his cup. It can be analysed. He died of funk, sheer funk—and a guilty conscience."

"And you didn't—kill him?"

We stared at one another in blank amazement. In silence we watched Mace drop the smoked-out end of his cigarette into the heart of the smouldering logs. His voice sounded very weary, like the voice of an old man, as he replied:—

"No. He killed himself. And now, if you'd like to ring for the police——"

I snatched in a quick breath of relief. The room spun dizzily round me as I stumbled across to the telephone.

HAROLD LLOYD

A Personal "Close-up" of One of the World's Greatest Laughter-makers

Harold Lloyd as he appears on the screen.

BETWEEN the Harold Lloyd of the films and the Mr. Harold Clayton Lloyd who lives in a picturesque Italian villa on the outskirts of Hollywood, California, there is only one important difference. It consists of a large pair of tortoise-shell spectacles.

Whether Harold Lloyd would ever have become famous without those frames, or whether those frames would ever have become popular without Harold Lloyd, is a debatable question. At any rate, they constitute not only a "trade mark," but a really effective disguise, the full extent of which can only be appreciated by comparing the portraits on this page.

Difficult though it may be to associate the pleasant-looking, vigorous young man on the left with the gentle, pale-faced, be-spectacled youth of picture fame, it is a fact that Harold Lloyd in private life has many of the characteristics and mannerisms of his film shadow. With strangers—especially those of the fair sex—he is shy and self-conscious almost to the point of blushing. In conversation, once the barrier of reserve is broken down,

Mildred Davis and Harold Lloyd in a very human little episode from "Safety Last"—one of the typical touches of pathos with which nearly all of his comedies are skilfully interspersed.

Mr. Harold Clayton Lloyd as he appears in private life.

he reveals a boyish frankness, a remarkable understanding of human nature, and a very sincere desire to please. It is at work, however, that he displays the most important characteristic of all—imperturbability. He radiates energy without "hustle," and optimism without exuberance. His calm, unruffled bearing is undoubtedly his greatest asset, for not only does it enhance his popularity among his fellow-workers, but it supplies the foundation upon which much of his humour is constructed.

Watching him at work upon one of the scenes of his latest comedy—appropriately entitled "Why Worry?"—I was greatly impressed by the quiet manner in which he handled the various technical difficulties that confronted him. Amidst the noise and bustle of carpenters and electricians he walked round the studio giving instructions to the other actors and the camera-men and discussing with his director the art of manufacturing laughter as though he were solving some grave political problem. He reminded me of an incident I had seen in one of his pictures, in which he wheeled a baby in a perambulator straight through a whirl of traffic, missing disasters by inches, and making the audience breathless with anxiety until he had reached the safety of the footpath—then, finding that he had dropped something in the middle of the road, he calmly turned back, still with the perambulator, and braved the dangers all over again!

The famous comedian at the age of two.

That is characteristic of the real Harold Lloyd, for he concentrates so closely upon whatever he happens to be doing that he becomes quite oblivious of his surroundings.

I am told that when he was quite a small boy it was this very trait which gave him his first lift on the road to fame. The son of a none-too-successful sewing-machine salesman, he started his career by selling newspapers in the streets of Denver, Colorado, and later he opened a little stall outside the railway station, where he sold pop-corn. In those days he had a great passion for conjuring tricks, and every spare copper he could get was spent at the magical stores—which brings us to our story.

One day he was standing with his nose pressed against a shop window, watching a demonstration within, when a fire-engine dashed by. The majority of the crowd, thirsting for new sensations, ran after it, but young Lloyd was so engrossed in the performance that he paid no heed to the clanging bells. At that moment along came an old actor, and he was so astounded at the sight of this unnatural youth who preferred conjuring to conflagrations that he stopped and spoke to him. The boy, fascinated by the glamour of the stage, and knowing that his mother had been talking of letting one of her rooms, decided to make the most of this opportunity of striking up a friendship with a real live actor, so he calmly asked the gentleman whether he was seeking apartments. The actor took a fancy to the youngster, and a few days later he went to live with the Lloyd family. A firm friendship between the boy and himself was soon established, which led, eventually, to the offer of an engagement in the stock company of which the actor was a member.

Harold Lloyd's first public appearance was in the *rôle* of Abraham in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and he followed it up by playing other boy parts, continuing his schooling between performances. Then his voice broke, and he came to the age when he was neither boy nor man. The only parts which he could now fill were small character *rôles* involving elaborate disguises. So, under the expert tuition of his friend, he made a careful study of the art of make-up, and, among other parts, appeared as Tonga the Indian in a Sherlock Holmes play.

Later, when he went to Los Angeles, it was his aptitude for disguise that enabled him to obtain his first opening in a film studio.

Day after day he had called at the casting department of one of the big film-producing companies in the hope of obtaining employment as an "extra," but without success. He was almost on the verge of despair when he was inspired with one of those typically Lloydian ideas which have made his pictures famous. He noticed that when the luncheon hour came round the small-part actors, dressed in a variety of picturesque costumes, and with the yellow make-up on their faces, would wander into the road outside the studio and sit down for a quiet smoke. So one day he ran home for his make-up box, disguised himself as a character of a similar type to the other actors, and concealed himself behind a tree until the whistle blew for the crowd of

supers to return to their work. Then he calmly mingled with the throng and passed unchallenged through the gates!

So far, so good. The problem was what to do next. His first impulse was to follow the crowd and take his place under the supervision of the nearest producer, but after a moment's thought he realized that this would be sadly unremunerative, since his name was not on the pay-sheet and he would get no money at the end of the day's work.

Suddenly a firm hand was placed on his shoulder and he had visions of being forcibly ejected.

"Say—are you working?" inquired a voice behind him.

"N-no," he stammered. "I—I've just finished."

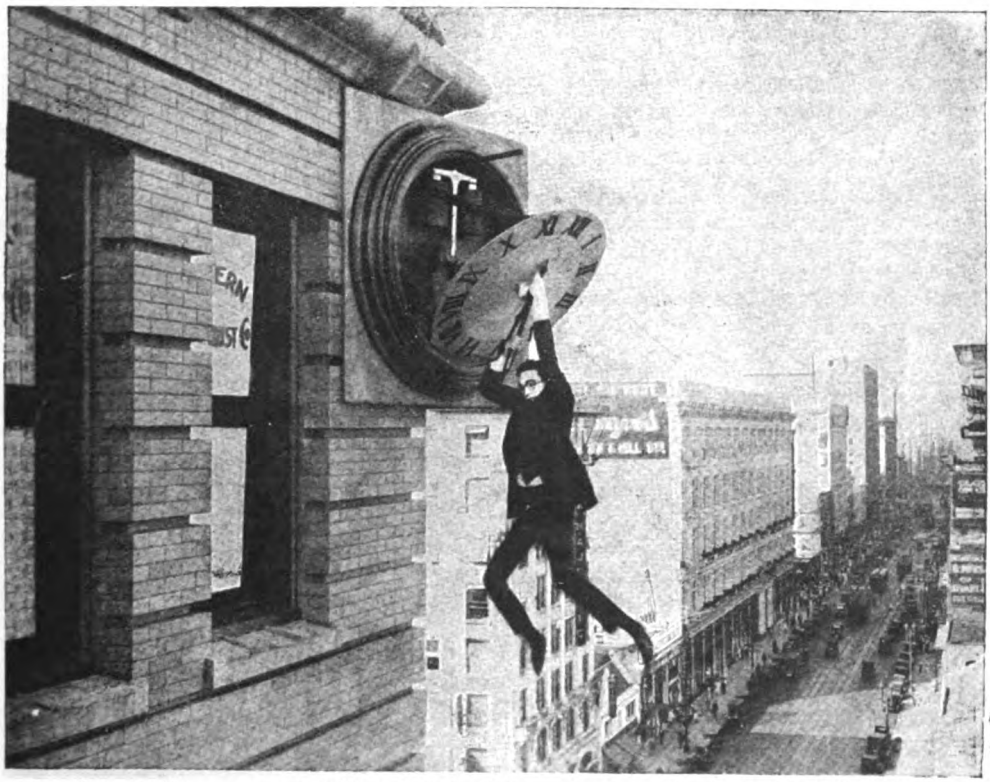
"Well," said the voice, "you'd better come over to the 'set' across the way; we're wanting one or two extras."

That was how he obtained his first engagement in a film studio. Incidentally he received the sum of three dollars for his services.

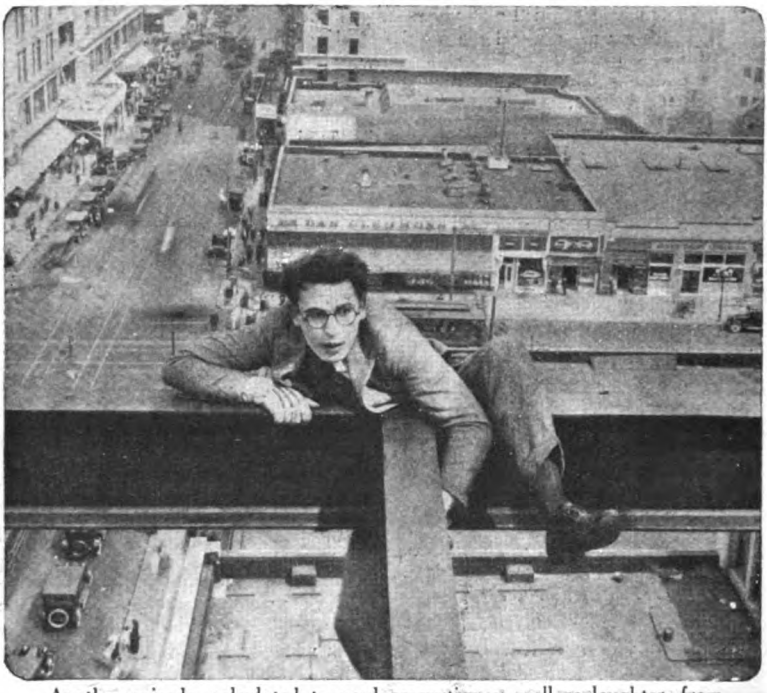
Among the other small-part actors in that studio was a man named Hal Roach. The two became fast friends, and when, a few years later, Roach inherited a little money and decided to go in for picture production on his own, he invited Lloyd to accompany him. In a deserted building which they were pleased to call their "studio" they made a number of short comedies. Clowning—or "slap-stick," as the Americans call it—was quite a new line of business for a young actor who had received his training in legitimate drama, but he took to it quite readily. His attitude in those days may be summed up in his own words: "I'd have agreed to be a hippopotamus for fifty dollars a week!" Some of these early pictures were fairly successful—particularly those in which Harold Lloyd appeared as "Lonesome Luke," a tramp character for which he made up, in direct contrast to the much-imitated Charles Chaplin, by dressing in very tight trousers.

Eventually Roach obtained a contract to supply comedies to a well-known firm of renters, and he decided that the time had come to open a properly-equipped studio.

Harold Lloyd, with characteristic conscientiousness, searched round for a new idea that would give a distinctive touch to the new pictures they were about to undertake.



One of the thrilling moments in "Safety Last," which was filmed some hundreds of feet above the level of the street.



Another episode, calculated to produce vertigo as well as laughter, from a similar "stunt" picture entitled "Never Weaken."

of solemnity and dignity by introducing shell-rimmed glasses into his make-up, it might, he thought, strike a note of incongruity that would establish an entirely new style of humour.

As every cinema-goer knows, that is exactly what he has succeeded in doing. But even the spectacles were not introduced without a great deal of care and thought. The first experiments with them disclosed the fact that the reflection of the studio lights on the glasses caused halation on the film and the lenses had to be removed.

One night he went to the theatre to see a drama. One of the characters on the stage was a typical American business man who wore tortoise-shell-rimmed glasses. Lloyd noticed that these glasses seemed to lend an air of grave dignity which made the character stand out from the rest, and he was pondering upon the reason for this when suddenly the Great Idea was born. If he could only instil into his comedies a similar atmosphere

A scene from "Now or Never." In his haste to catch a train, Harold Lloyd drives his car right through the wall of a barn containing a sleeping tramp and other live stock—with the consequences depicted.

Then he discovered that the frames concealed his eyebrows and hampered facial expression, so he had to have a fresh pair made to overcome this difficulty. Next he met with a certain amount of opposition from the company for whom the films were to be made. They wanted "Lonesome Luke," and were not at all inclined to favour the new make-up. However, Lloyd pleaded with them to give the new character a trial and allow him to prove his contention that the spectacles would help him to be funny as well as to look funny. Eventually they gave in, and the first pictures into which the famous frames were introduced were some college-boy comedies. Soon "Lonesome Luke" was forgotten, and a new character was established whom they called "Winkle." It was not until he began to make longer and more elaborate films that the name of Harold Lloyd became known to the public, and it is interesting to reflect that, although his earlier successes may have helped considerably to establish his reputation as a comedian, the name by which he is now famous has only been associated with four full-length films—his fifth having been just released. Only three years ago he was practically unknown. To-day, at the age of thirty, he has attained the pinnacle of popularity.

Yet nobody is more astonished at his success than Harold Lloyd himself. Indeed, he seems to have been so preoccupied with his work that he has not had time to travel much, and therefore has not had an opportunity to gauge the extent of his own popularity. It is a significant fact that he is practically the only film star whose name appears in the Los

Dressing the baby—a difficult problem for a bachelor to solve. An amusing incident in "Now or Never."

As the hypochondriac receiving his daily dose of pills at the hands of a friendly giant. A scene from "Why Worry?" Harold Lloyd's latest picture.

Angeles Telephone Directory. The others adopt assumed names in order to protect themselves against incessant calls from film-struck girls and hero-worshippers, but Harold Lloyd, apparently, does not consider himself sufficiently famous to warrant this form of self-defence.

One day whilst I was lunching with him and his fellow-workers at the Hal Roach studios—film-folk are usually very democratic, and all of them, from the star to the boy who sweeps the floor, sit at the same table for meals—he spoke of coming to England on a private visit. When I told him that he would find it very difficult to maintain his incognito, and that once his identity was known he would be mobbed, just as Chaplin, Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford were, he gave me a characteristic glance through his shell-rimmed frames as though a little inclined to think that I was "pulling his leg." He has a genuine aversion for the limelight, and would run a mile to avoid a crowd. Quite recently, during a break in his work, he was wandering round the vast studios in his make-up, and paused for a while to give a word of advice to a budding film comedian who was on another set. Several "small-part" girls were standing by, and presently one of them stepped forward and said: "Mr. Lloyd—we want you to do us a great favour."

"Oh, what's that?" he asked.

"We want you to let us see how you look without your glasses," the girl replied, amidst a chorus of "Oh, do's!" from the others. Harold Lloyd blushed under his make-up and made some excuse about having to get on with his work. But the girls did not intend to be shaken off, and insisted that he should promise to take off his glasses as soon as he had finished filming. Under protest he consented, and as soon as his work was done the girls flocked round him again. At last, with the mock-dramatic gesture of a highwayman removing his mask, he took off his glasses, only to be met with a chorus of disappointed "Oh's!" Good-looking though the real Harold Lloyd appeared, the girls preferred the film version—the Harold Celluloid, as he calls him—and the glasses were instantly replaced.

Despite his fear of being lionized, however, I think it is practically certain that we may see him in England some time this year, for he still seems inclined to believe that the reports he has received of his popularity in this country are slightly exaggerated. Moreover, he is anxious to study the British public at close quarters.

"Over here," he told me, "I have plenty of opportunities to put my pictures to a fairly severe test. I like to give them a trial run at five or six different theatres, where the tastes of the patrons vary considerably. At each showing I note the sections of the films that fail to get laughs. These I cut right out—or sometimes re-take—until the fun is, so to speak, knitted more closely together. I wish I had a chance of measuring the tastes of your audiences in the same way.

"Tell me," he added, "do you think that this typically American humour appeals to the English?"

I replied that if Harold Lloyd's fun was typically American there had been a grave misunderstanding between the two nations in respect of humour hitherto.

His thoroughness in editing and revising his pictures is evident from the fact that "Safety Last" took six months to film, and that, roughly, twenty-five miles of negative were exposed, of which about twenty-three were developed and about half this amount printed. Yet the finished article was actually about three and a half miles in length.

Although he has a large staff of experts working with him, and is always eager to give them every credit due, the majority of the ideas which make Harold Lloyd's comedies so fresh and spontaneous originate in his own brain.

That remarkable medley of laughter and

Colosso, the giant, bowls out an army of revolutionaries whilst Harold Lloyd keeps the score—another scene from his new film "Why Worry?"

thrills which he called "Safety Last" was suggested by the sight of a professional "stunt" performer actually climbing a sky-scraper as an advertising dodge. Lloyd immediately engaged the man to assist him in the production of the film. Conferences were held to weave a story round the main idea—for Harold Lloyd insists that even a comic film should have a definite plot to sustain the interest—and a schedule of work was mapped out. Nevertheless, the actual inspirations for the little touches of real comedy which are identified with Harold Lloyd's own personality did not come until the actual filming was in progress. For instance, there was a scene in which the boy and his pal were seated in their humble bed-sitting-room, wondering where they were going to find the money to pay their rent, when the landlady suddenly knocked on the door. The two looked round hurriedly for a means of escape, and in an instant they rushed to the clothes rack on the wall and hung themselves up on the hooks beneath their overcoats until the danger had passed. That was the original conception of the idea, but when the scene came to be "shot" Lloyd suddenly thought of another "gag" which made a fitting climax to this excellent piece of comedy. As those who have seen the film will remember, immediately after the incident just described "the boy" went to the table to write a letter to his girl. Finding his pal very much in the way, he gave another sharp "tap-tap" on the door. The pal, thinking that the landlady had returned, instantly rushed beneath his overcoat and hung himself up on the hook as before, whilst Harold Lloyd calmly sat down and proceeded with the writing of his love-letter!

Harold Lloyd with John Aasen, who appears with him in "Why Worry?" The giant, a Norwegian, is eight feet nine and a quarter inches tall, and wears size twenty in shoes.

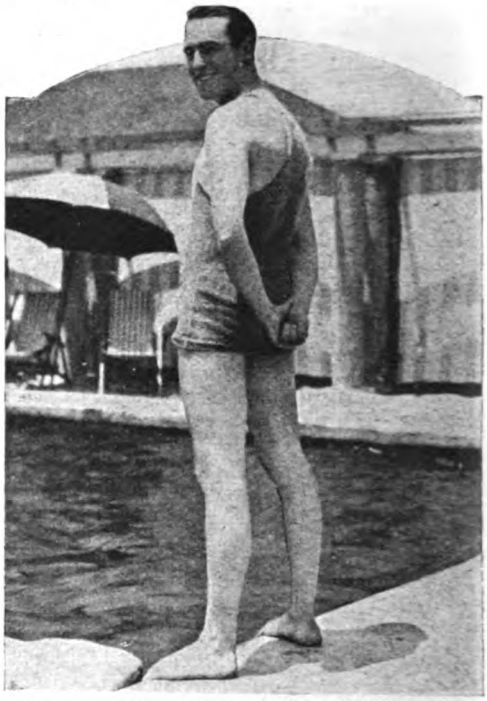
Such ideas as these can only come spontaneously, and Lloyd, realizing this fact, sometimes dismisses the rest of his cast and spends several hours in the set, with only his camera-man and producer, experimenting with new ideas that may suggest themselves as he proceeds.

Comedy is to him what tragedy was to Irving—a serious art. The only time that he shows any tendency to flippancy and boyish exuberance is when his work is over. Even at home he is not at all inclined to pose as a funny man. Occasionally he amuses his friends by reverting to the hobby of his boyhood days — performing conjuring tricks—but, on the other hand, many of his leisure hours are spent in reading or playing chess. He goes in for dancing and swimming as a means of keeping fit, and indulges in systematic physical exercises every morning to prepare himself for his day's work. The photograph on the next page, which shows him standing on the brink of his private swimming bath in the grounds of his home, reveals that he is well-proportioned, and not so tall or slender as

his films seem to suggest. One has only to watch his acrobatic comedy to realize how remarkably fit he must be.

What is most noteworthy about his exploits as a "stunt" performer, however, is that some years ago, whilst working upon one of his early films, he met with an accident with a bomb, which, in addition to other injuries, nearly cost him his eyesight; and although he has otherwise recovered, he has not regained the full use of one of his hands.

He declares, however, that "Safety Last" is the climax of his achievements in the way of thrill-making, and he does not intend to produce any further pictures of this type, because he is sensible enough to realize his limitations. He is anxious, also, that his name shall not be associated with any one particular style of film, and his latest production, "Why Worry?" is very different from "Safety Last." In it the element of farce is predominant. He appears as a young and wealthy hypochondriac —"so full of pills that he rattles when he walks"—who goes to a drowsy place called Paradiso for a rest-cure and becomes entangled in a wild South American revolution and a love affair.



An unconventional snapshot of Harold Lloyd ready for the morning dip in his private swimming bath.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lloyd in their home near Hollywood. [Photos] [Ablé.

The humorous touches in this film depend largely upon the introduction of a giant who stands eight feet nine and a quarter inches tall, and is built in proportion, and who acts as an excellent foil to Lloyd's comedy.

To enter into details of the picture would be to spoil the enjoyment of seeing it, but one other point of interest may be mentioned. It introduces a new leading lady, by name Jobyna Ralston. The reason for this has a touch of romance behind it, for Mildred Davis, the pretty fair-haired girl who has appeared in most of his films hitherto, ended her screen career at the conclusion of "Safety Last," and took up a domestic engagement as Mrs. Harold Lloyd.

PLAIN JANE

by

HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

I.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

LORD PENDRAGON—prince of bankers and banker of princes—paused on the threshold of the door.

"A last word, my dear: remember that you will go in to dinner ahead of all the duchesses."

He murmured this with a faintly ironical smile. As the door closed behind his portly, ambassadorial form, Jane Timpany laughed, repeating in a whisper:—

"Ahead of all the duchesses!"

She glanced about her. In the big, over-decorated drawing-room there was no mirror. In the hall below, in the spacious corridors, mirrors were conspicuously absent. Visitors had noticed this.

"So many beautiful women come to this charming house, Jenny. Your mother and you give them everything of the best, except the pleasure of beholding themselves and their frocks."

Jane Timpany would reply, coldly:—

"I dislike looking-glasses."

All the Timpanys had been plain people, physically and mentally robust, born and bred money-makers and money-savers. Thomas, Jane's father, had married a woman nearly as rich as himself, out of another cotton-spinning family. During the war Jane lost her two brothers. After the war Thomas Timpany sold his mills, and, having nothing to engross his energies, died.

Bachelors, eligible and ineligible, had proposed marriage to Jane. To all and sundry she said, curtly, "No."

Finally, upon this eventful afternoon, a semi-royalty, by proxy, had flung his handkerchief at her feet. His Highness, whom Jane had met only twice, was apparently heels over head in love with "*les beaux yeux de sa casette.*" A Minister Plenipotentiary, discretion incarnate, had refused to carry "No" to a Personage!

As a butler and two tall footmen were expediting the departure of his lordship, Jane ascended a marble staircase to her bedroom. Here she surveyed herself dispassionately in a cheval glass. As she did so, she exclaimed once more:—

"Ahead of all the duchesses!"

And then, in a whisper:—

"Plain Jane!"

The adjective provoked a smile, and the smile had charm. Humorous lines revealed themselves round a large mouth; too small eyes twinkled. She curtsied to herself:—

"Your Highness!"

Presently she went to her mother's room. Mrs. Timpany surveyed her daughter shrewdly.

"Well, Jenny?"

Jane sat down, staring at her mother's whimsical countenance.

"Lord Pendragon says that the Prince wants to marry me. He is coming back for a definite answer in a fortnight's time. If I am to be sold to the highest bidder, mother, I might do worse. I should dominate him; he would not dominate me."

"He might try, my dear."

"I said 'No'; but our banker thinks I shall change my mind. I sha'n't."

Mrs. Timpany smiled.

"When St. Peter asks me what I have done, I shall tell him that I brought into the world a sensible girl who refused to peacock about Mayfair as a princess."

Mrs. Timpany spoke with a slight Lancashire burr. Her maternal grandmother had run about Oldham bareheaded, wearing the clogs, the woollen skirt, and the shawl still to be seen in the streets of that industrial centre.

Jane said, incisively:—

"My money will make an old maid of me."

"When I was your age, dear, I wanted a man. I've no patience with women who say they don't."

"You were married for yourself, mother."

"Yes—and no better-looking than you

Copyright, 1924, by Horace Annesley Vachell.

are. If you remain an old maid, Jenny, whatever shall we do with our money ? "

" I'm not going to be married for my money. That's that."

Mrs. Timpany picked up a letter lying upon her lap.

" You have heard me speak, Jenny, of the Tollerfields ? "

" Dozens of times," replied Jane.

" I have had a letter, a begging letter, from William Tollerfield. The Timpanys and the Tollerfields climbed the hill together before I was born. Poor William seems to have tumbled down the hill. Read his letter, dear."

Jane read as follows :—

" Dear Madam,—

" I take the liberty, as a friend of your late husband, to ask for financial assistance. We never met, but I married, you may remember, a school-mate of yours, long since dead. Happily, misfortune never touched her. My father made the mistake of educating me as a man of leisure. The fortune left to me by him is gone. To-day I am a helpless invalid and almost hopeless. A grant in aid from you would sweeten my adversity. I enclose letters from my doctor and from the local clergyman which establish identity.

" I remain,

" Faithfully yours,

" WILLIAM TOLLERFIELD."

Jane stared at the letter. The handwriting was firm. Mrs. Timpany added a few words :—

" The doctor says that his patient is in mean lodgings, suffering from arthritis. The parson says that the writer is known to him as William Tollerfield, son of Henry Tollerfield, of Oldham."

" What do you want to do, mother ? "

" He was a friend of your father."

" Did father ever help him ? "

" I don't know. You're not getting hard, are you, Jenny ? "

" We receive so many appeals, mother. We have been let down so often."

" He married, as he says, a girl I knew, a nice girl. There was a son. He doesn't mention the son. Perhaps he is dead, too, killed in the war. We—we ought to do something."

Jane glanced at the letter.

" Mr. Tollerfield writes from Puddiford-on-Sea, near Cronmouth."

"Yes, Jenny. If we slipped down there and investigated this case at first hand——"

" If you like."

" Incog. ! "

" Mother ! What an idea ! "

" Our fashionable friends will think we have gone abroad."

" It would be an adventure, mother. We—we should get away from our money for a few days, shouldn't we ? "

" Yes, dear."

Within three days, two ladies, who signed the register as Mrs. and Miss Stroud, took modest rooms at the Ivanhoe Hotel, a select boarding-house on the front at Puddiford-on-Sea.

II.

JANE was astounded, and amused, by the startling change in her mother. Mrs. Timpany became almost frisky as Mrs. Stroud, and was accepted by the other boarders as an addition to their circle.

Within twenty-four hours Jane wandered down the street, not facing the front, where William Tollerfield lived in mean lodgings. A dingy window exhibited a sign : *Apartments*. Greatly daring, Jane rang the bell. The mistress of the house opened the door.

" If you have rooms vacant, I should like to see them," said Jane.

" Pray walk in, madam."

Gentility informed harsh tones. Jane leapt to the conclusion that the landlady might have been a lady's maid who had known happier days. She eyed Jane sharply, as she murmured :—

" My best rooms are vacant."

Jane inspected two bedrooms and a shabby sitting-room. Then she heard a familiar sound, the clicking of a typewriting machine. Jane looked up, listening, as the landlady explained :—

" Typist. Not overworked, neither ! Supports his father."

William Tollerfield's letter had not been typewritten. Jane said, tentatively :—

" Is the father an invalid ? "

The landlady, not at all garrulous, nodded, shaking her head dolorously. Jane was meditating another question, when the clicking stopped. An instant later a step was heard upon the stairs.

" I beg your pardon."

A man about thirty stood upon the threshold of the sitting-room.

" I am going out," he said, pleasantly. " My father will not disturb you unless it is necessary."

" Very good, Mr. Tollerfield."

Jane sat down. She had liked the tones of a voice which had " supporting " quality.

" Unusual name—Tollerfield."

The landlady, beguiled by Jane's smile, became more communicative. The fact that Jane was sitting in the best arm-chair suggested business. Up to this moment intuition had told her that her rooms were not quite good enough for this quietly-dressed lady. Still—one never knew !

" It is a shame, I say, that a clever

young man should be tied tight to a crippled father. Ought to be on his own. But there! It's none of my business. Do you fancy the rooms, madam?"

Jane replied evasively:—

"I will speak to my mother about them."

Terms were discussed. Jane returned to the Ivanhoe Hotel, anticipating maternal objections to any move for the worse. Really all that could be said of the rooms might be included in one sentence: "They are perfectly clean."

Mrs. Timpany, looking like an alert robin, became interested in young Mr. Tollerfield.

"Good stock," she declared. "I suppose we ought to find out more before we help."

"That is my idea, mother. Are you sure that the father won't recognize you?"

"We never met; Jenny. I'm ready to go where you want to go."

So they went.

III.

NOTHING happened for a day or two.

The son, whose name, so Jane discovered, was John, seemed to be of a retiring disposition. Not so the father, who in his youth had pushed himself everywhere. Now he was pushed, like a baby in an immense "pram," by his son—generally along the front for two hours every afternoon. In the morning the continual clicking of the typewriting machine indicated literary labours. The landlady informed Jane that the Tollerfields sent off and received many letters. Jane was not surprised when the landlady whispered to her:—

"It's my belief, miss, that the old man is a genteel beggar."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Jane.

On top of this disconcerting affirmation, acquaintance was "scraped" between the Tollerfields and the Strouds. Garrulous old age met over a dish of tea. Mr. William Tollerfield spoke of the far north. Quite incidentally, he mentioned the Timpanys.

"You've heard of the Timpanys?" he asked.

"Who hasn't?"

"Purse-proud snobs, madam."

Jane winced, expecting an explosion from her mother. To her surprise, Mrs. Timpany's sense of humour rose to the occasion.

"Are they?"

"Pinchers, my dear lady. Tom Timpany is dead. The women, mother and daughter, are rolling in money. Between ourselves, I—William Tollerfield, an old friend—applied for a small—er—grant in aid. What happened to my letter?"

"Tell me."

"Waste-paper basket!"

"Too bad!"

Jane observed, mildly:—

"Probably these——"

"Timpanys."

"Yes. These Timpanys, I dare say, receive such appeals by the dozen every day. But if you had a particular claim on them——" Her voice died away, but she glanced at John's impassive face.

He answered, curtly:—

"My father's claim was the appeal of Misfortune to Fortune."

Having said

As she surveyed herself dispassionately, she exclaimed: "Plain Jane!"

this, John's lips closed. His father embroidered the theme; and as he warmed to his work, Jane recognized in him some of the qualities of Mr. Micawber.

"To relieve necessity is a privilege accorded by Omnipotence to the rich. Personally, I share Heine's opinion——"

"Whose?"

"Heinrich Heine. A Hun, but he lived in Paris. He said that if you wanted to know what God really thought of millionaires you had only to look at them."

The Timpanys looked at each other. William Tollerfield continued blandly:—

"My friend Timpany married a plain woman, and their daughter, so I'm told, has a face like a nutmeg-grater."

Even under this provocation, Mrs. Timpany murmured softly:—

"Handsome is as handsome does."

"Just so, madam, just so. I—er—was prepared to regard Jane Timpany as Anadyomene——"

"Anna——?"

"Venus rising from the sea, my dear lady, lovely and lovable, had she responded to my S.O.S. signal."

"Did you ask Mrs. Timpany to save your soul, Mr. Tollerfield?"

Thus Jane—with a tincture of acerbity. John glanced at her sharply.

"You are sarcastic, Miss Stroud, at the expense of age and infirmity."

"No, no. But," her voice hardened, "from what your father has just said, I inferred that the rich might save *their* souls if they exercised the privilege of saving the bodies of the poor."

William Tollerfield chuckled:—

"I couldn't have put that more neatly myself."

Harmony was restored, although John, with a vehemence which surprised Jane, plunged into an indictment of the rich. When he finished Mrs. Timpany said, slyly:—

"According to you, young man, God helps those who help themselves out of other folks' piles."

Again the infirm William chuckled. A minute later father and son went upstairs.

IV.

ALONE with her mother, Jane exhibited indignation. Mrs. Timpany laughed at a too serious face.

"I'm so sorry for them."

"You are always surprising, mother."

"So your dear father said. I should like to surprise these people."

"How?"

"If we sent them a hundred pounds——"

"Absurd!"

"Would they relieve *our* necessities?"

Jane grappled with the issues.

"What a test!"

Mrs. Timpany nodded. Jane exclaimed:—

"How wonderful of you to get fun out of such a situation!"

"I suppose I could whine, Jenny, if I tried hard enough."

"I'd like to see you at it."

"You shall. Really, this is gingering me up. I think plain food agrees with plain people."

They talked with animation for half an hour. Long before that it was agreed that a hundred pounds should be sent to the old friend of Thomas Timpany. A letter was written:—

"Dear Sir,-

"My daughter and I regret that your letter of the 28th ult. was not answered more promptly. We are satisfied that you have a claim upon us. Kindly acknowledge the enclosed cheque, which we hope will serve to sweeten your sad life.

"Faithfully yours,

"BERTHA TIMPANY."

As Mrs. Timpany was writing out the cheque, Jane observed reflectively:—

"It's a good deal to pay for a bit of fun."

"I like the young man," replied her mother.

V.

DURING the days that passed between the sending of this letter (from London) and its delivery at Puddiford-on-Sea, acquaintance between the Tollerfields and the Strouds ripened into intimacy.

Upon the Tuesday morning the letter arrived. Joyous notes of exclamation were plainly heard in the parlour beneath.

"He's got it," observed Mrs. Timpany.

"What will he do with it?" demanded Jane.

"We shall be invited to tea."

They were, and an excellent tea was provided. A cheque may be as rejuvenating as the Voronoff treatment. The infirm William beamed upon his guests, as John handed round the *friandises* sent in by the local confectioner.

"This is a farewell entertainment."

"We are faring very well, Mr. Tollerfield, but—what do you mean?"

"My son and I are thinking of moving to better lodgings facing the sea."

"Really? You might do worse than the Ivanhoe. We moved from there here." Mrs. Timpany sighed. She continued with an unmistakable whine: "Not expensive, you understand, but beyond our diminishing means."

Jane "played up."

"Now, mother, this is not the moment to impose our troubles upon Mr. Tollerfield."

"Troubles?" repeated Mr. Tollerfield. "Well, well, it is a relief sometimes to talk of one's troubles. A firm faith in Providence has always sustained me. At the same time, crippled as I am, I have fought my troubles. You behold me, madam, bloody but unbowed. Another cup of tea?"

"Thank you. If you would give me, also, *advice*——"

"The fruit of your own experience," added Jane.

Slightly uneasy, Mr. Tollerfield said, briskly:—

"Certainly. With—er—pleasure."

"We may have to move to humbler lodgings. Money due to us has not been paid. Under such circumstances, ought we to apply for help to certain friends? You applied to those——" She glanced at John.

"Timpanys!"

"Yes, yes. And they basketed you."

For an instant there was silence, a silence significant to the Timpanys. Jane looked at John. Mrs. Timpany's twinkling brown eyes rested upon the genial William. John's cheeks flushed. By this time Jane had recognized in him the quality of altruism. Of his devotion to an exacting father there could be no question. The rich may be pardoned when they cock a doubtful eyebrow at what appears to be unselfishness. Probably they have reason behind the conviction that most people grind their own axes. Within ten minutes Jane had summed up the infirm William as a "*faux bonhomme*." John, on the other hand, defied a spinster's analysis.

William spoke first

"We have heard from the Timpanys. My—er—claim upon their consideration has been recognized. In point of fact, a grant in aid came this morning."

Mrs. Timpany said, quietly: "How nice! Makes one think better of the world, doesn't it?"

William nodded majestically.

"I take the world as I find it, dear lady!"

"Taking," thought Jane, "is his hobby! What a man!"

John exclaimed explosively: "I regret what I said about the Timpanys. They have been most generous—astoundingly, confoundingly so!"

"How nice!" repeated Mrs. Timpany, soothingly. "What you tell me makes it easier for me!"

"For us," added Jane.

The astute William betrayed nervousness; his nose twitched, scenting importunity.

"You mean that you will be emboldened to apply to your friends for some—er—slight assistance. An appeal—discreetly worded——"

He paused. Obviously, out of a rich vocabulary, he was considering phrases.

"I—I have never appealed to—to anybody," murmured Mrs. Timpany.

William, apparently much moved, exclaimed: "*I'm* at your service."

Jane, with a side-glance at John, said, gratefully: "Oh, Mr. Tollerfield, we—we couldn't accept a grant in aid from you, but how sweet of you to think of it."

William inflated.

"No, no. I appreciate your delicacy, but I—*I* will word this appeal for you. It will be a mournful pleasure to do so."

"But I can't think to whom I could apply," said Mrs. Timpany, despairingly. "Ten pounds would tide us over a distressing fortnight, but——"

Jane added with dignity, "We have no near relations. Our rich friends—for reasons which we need not go into—would hardly believe that we, mother and I, really wanted ten pounds."

William nodded like the Olympian Jupiter as he suggested, "An overdraft at your bankers'?"

"We have never asked our bankers to allow us an overdraft. It might upset them," faltered Mrs. Timpany.

William cleared his throat and vision.

"You have asked for my advice. I reply, unhesitatingly, *write to the Timpanys*."

He folded his hands upon an ample paunch.

"I will dictate a letter—here and now. John!"

"Father!"

"Your note-book." As John rose from the tea-table, William, now master of the situation, said incisively: "Ten pounds is a bagatelle. Friends and relations should be kept in—er—*reserve* for more serious exigencies." Ha! An idea! Are you ready, John?"

John, pencil in hand, nodded, but he looked—so Jane thought—ill at ease.

"Take this down, my boy, as a rough draft. One moment!" He closed his eyes, smiling graciously.

"Yes, yes: I have it. You told me, Mrs. Stroud, that you came from the north country. You mentioned Oldham in the course of conversation. Oldham shall be the keystone of our arch. Now! 'Dear Madam,—You will be surprised that a stranger should venture to address you, to entreat from you sorely needed help. Nothing, save the fact that your generosity and beneficence are known throughout the Kingdom'—capital K for Kingdom, John—'justifies me in making this'—I want

an adjective—— Yes—I have it—' *poignant* appeal. Like yourself, I am a widow with one daughter. I was born in Oldham '; underline that, John——"

"Were you born in Oldham, mother?" asked Jane.

"I was born not far from Oldham, Jenny. Does it matter?"

"Not a bit," replied William. "A touch of local colour. I continue—'I was born in Oldham. At the moment I am stranded in—er—mean lodgings at Puddiford-on-Sea, where, by a Providential coincidence, I have made the acquaintance of the Tollerfields. Mr. William Tollerfield has spoken to me in confidence of you and of your daughter. What he said cannot, of course, be repeated, but I gleaned'—gleaned is quite good!—'I gleaned from Mr. Tollerfield that you were one who—who——'"

Jane finished the sentence.

"Did not hurl such letters as this into the void of the waste-paper basket."

"Put it down, John."

John did so.

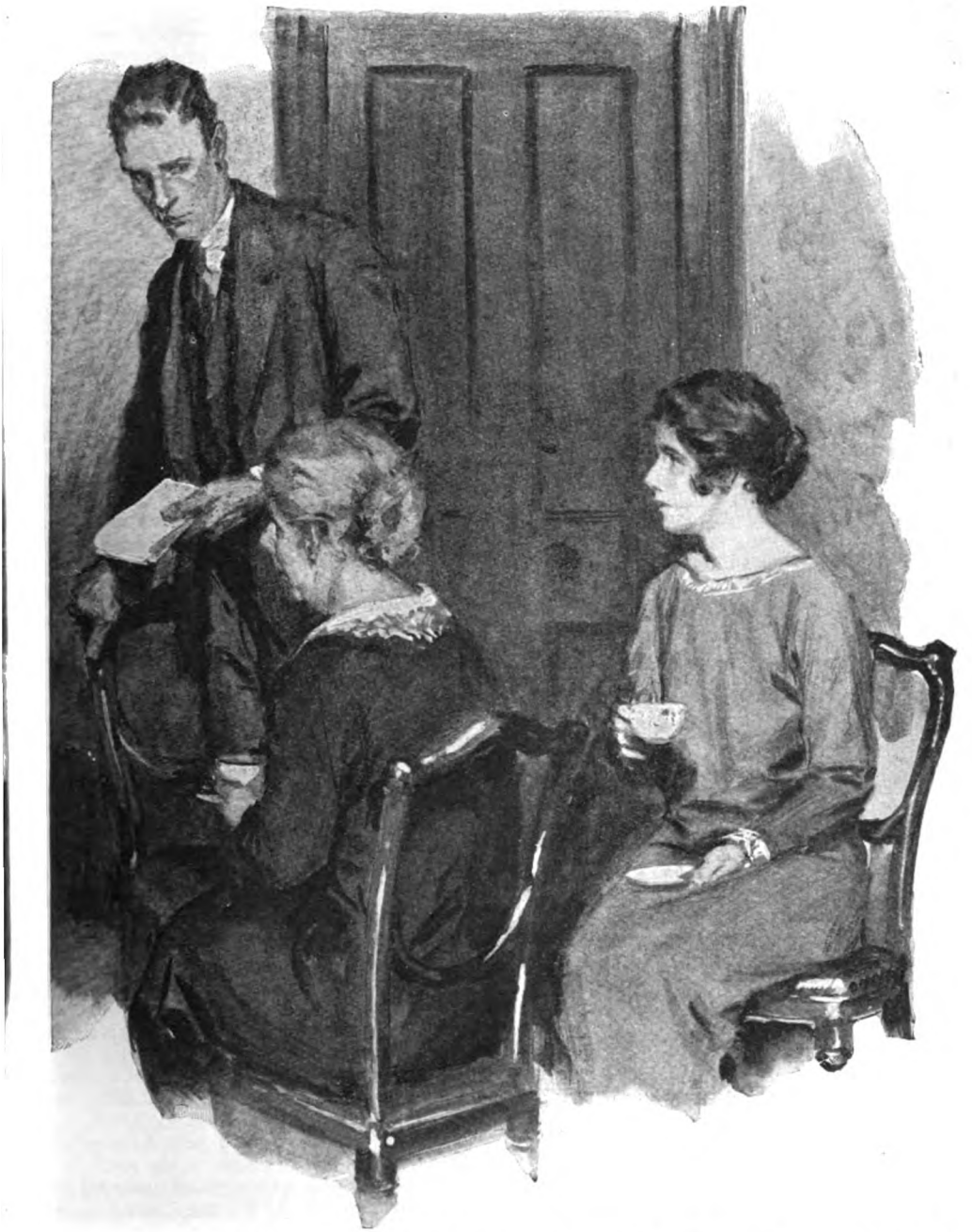
"We pause for a suitable climax," said William, once more closing his eyes. "Yes—yes—this will serve. 'I am expecting within a few days a remittance.' That is the truth, madam, isn't it?"

"It is," murmured Mrs. Timpany.

"'But, alas! I may be constrained by necessity to seek even humbler lodgings before the remittance reaches me. Will you help me with a loan of ten pounds, which I pledge myself to return? Mr. Tollerfield would, I know, permit me to cite him as a reference and——'"

John stood up. He tore from the notebook the sheet of pencillings, crumpled it up, and hurled it into the Tollerfield waste-paper basket.

John, pencil in hand, looked—so Jane thought—ill at ease.
"Take this down, my boy, as a rough draft," said Mr. Tollerfield.



Explain yourself," commanded William.

" That reference to us. It's too thick. I—I can't stick it, father. I—I will lend ten pounds gladly to Mrs. Stroud——"

" You ? "

Obviously William was astounded that his son should have ten pounds to lend. He was glaring at John. Mrs. Timpany rose, and, with her, Jane. As quickly John hastened to the door and opened it.

" I quite understand," said Mrs. Timpany.

" So do I ! " said Jane.

" But I don't ! " thundered an angry father.

The ladies withdrew.

VI.

SAFE in the sanctuary of the shabby parlour, Mrs. and Miss Timpany heard voices raised in altercation.

"I am not disappointed in John," observed Mrs. Timpany. "He takes after his dear mother, a very unselfish woman."

"We have squandered a hundred pounds, mother."

"No, Jenny. Our money has been invested. But—don't ask any bothering questions yet."

"I hear John's step on the stairs."

"Really? How do you know that it is John's? As you do know, I will leave you to deal with him."

There was a tap on the door. Mrs. Timpany fled into her bedroom; Jane said "Come in."

John came in, still flushed of cheek. Jane indicated a chair. The young man hesitated, glanced at an impassive countenance, and sat down.

"Is it necessary to say anything?" asked Jane, calmly.

"Yes. Miss Stroud, I am sure that you are an understanding person, but you can't know all the unhappy facts. Mrs. and Miss Timpany sent my father one hundred pounds."

"No doubt they could afford to do so."

"That is not the point."

"I think I see your point."

"I'm sure you do. Out of one hundred pounds my father might well have spared ten pounds to—to help you. But I am not here to pass judgment on him. I beg you to accept, as a temporary loan, ten pounds from me. I shall take it as unfriendly of you if you don't!"

Jane said hurriedly, "I will accept that in—in the spirit which offers it."

John handed her an envelope. Then he said, stiffly, "The generosity of the Timpanys, Miss Stroud, has swept some cobwebs out of my mind. You may have regarded me as a Bolshy."

"Oh, no."

Her rare smile encouraged him to go on. "I would not have you think ill of my poor father, but, in spite of his infirmities, he remains genial and even gay. That is something, isn't it?"

A pathetic interrogation touched Jane.

"It is—much," she assented.

"When that cheque arrived this morning, he was the first to suggest that he might engage a man-nurse to relieve me, to—to leave me free to fight for my own hand."

"How do you propose to do that?"

"I am counting on the Timpanys. They have placed me under obligations. I would serve them faithfully. I am more than a mere typist and stenographer. In acknowledging receipt of that cheque, I have placed myself unreservedly at their service. It would be a great honour to work for them."

"You have told your father?"

"Not yet."

"Why have you told me?"

He remained silent, lifting eloquent eyes to hers.

Jane murmured, "This is a proof of—friendship?"

"Yes."

Obviously the young man was shy. Jane blushed as he exclaimed, "I am so glad you are poor, Miss Stroud."

"I don't know how to take that."

"I mean that it makes friendship between us possible. Will you accept me as your friend?"

"Yes," said Jane, firmly. "Now tell me in what way you can serve these—Timpanys."

"I'm an expert accountant, Miss Stroud. I had to leave a famous firm of actuaries to look after my father when he was stricken down with inflammatory rheumatism. They would vouch for me. As an accountant, a confidential secretary——"

"Quite," said Jane. "But it is certain that the Timpanys, being women, leave the management of their affairs in competent hands."

"They must be more or less at the mercy of unscrupulous persons. If—if I could save them from being imposed upon."

"That is a brain-wave," said Jane.

John, however, refused to talk further about himself. With pressing insistency he asked many questions indicating sympathetic interest in Mrs. and Miss Stroud. Jane, not being an accomplished liar, told the truth with discreet veilings. She admitted that life had been difficult, a series of compromises.

"We all want—romance."

Each, in turn, defined romance. They parted to meet again in a shelter upon the Marine Parade, not a romantic spot. John read the rough draft of a letter to Mrs. Timpany. Jane said demurely that she thought it would do.

"You have shown it to your father, Mr. Tollerfield?"

"No, no. He would have insisted on writing it himself."

"Probably Mrs. Timpany will suggest a personal interview, if—if she *understands* all that you have left unwritten."

John perceived that Jane was smiling. Her smile percolated through sensitive tissues. He decided that he had never seen such an all-weather smile. He seized Jane's firm hand and pressed it. Jane blushed for the second time that day, recalling what

her mother had said about this young man's mother. Obviously he had inherited much from her.

"What would you do," asked Jane, irrelevantly, "if you were rich enough to do what you like?"

He replied fervently, "I should ask you to marry me."

"Mr. Tollerfield!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Stroud, but I cannot disguise my feelings." He spoke so sorrowfully that Jane's smile came back.

"Evidently you can't," she murmured.

John said hastily, "I have nailed my flag to the mast. You know now how it is with me. Accept me——"

"*Accept* you?"

"On 'appro.' I may make good. I may not. These blessed Timpanys have saved the situation. I can go back to work. Back of my work you stand. Have I forfeited your friendship?"

"N-n-no."

"Fine!" He spoke briskly, regarding her with shining eyes. "We—we carry on, as we were, till——"

"Till——?"

"Till I get a sign from you."

She nodded, slightly bewildered. A more sophisticated lover might have accepted that nod as a sign. Jane stood up.

"I will go back to my mother."

In exciting silence they strolled towards their lodgings.

VII.

INVARIABLY punctual, Lord Pendragon presented his august person to Miss Timpany when the time limit imposed by him had expired. He looked portentously bland when the butler told him that Mrs. Timpany and Miss Timpany had returned to Prince's Gate the day before.

Jane received him, looking, so he thought, rejuvenated. As the butler was leaving the drawing-room, she said, disconcertingly: "I am expecting a Mr. Tollerfield, Judkins. He will ask to see my mother. But you can show him up here."

Judkins withdrew.

Lord Pendragon extended two white plump hands.

"My dear young lady, am I to be the first to congratulate you?"

"Upon what?"

"Upon your engagement to His Serene Highness? He was pleased, let me tell you, at your maidenly hesitation. And so, quite frankly, was I."

"But I didn't hesitate. I said 'No.'"

Lord Pendragon shrugged his shoulders.

"I took that 'No' as 'Perhaps.'"

"If I had said 'Perhaps'——"

"Ah! You smile. All is well."

He sat down as Jane, still smiling, sank into billowy cushions. He was thinking that this young woman intended to surrender, but not unconditionally. He noticed that Jane glanced at a magnificent Louis XV. clock.

"You came back yesterday. You were expecting me?"

"Yes. It is kind of you, Lord Pendragon, to be so interested in finding me a husband. But—do you really know the right man when you see him?"

The famous banker screwed an eyeglass into his eye. Mellifluously, he stated that such knowledge was his inalienable possession.

"You know men," admitted Jane, "but do you know women?"

Wisely, Lord Pendragon hesitated. Jane went on: "Pomps and vanities have never appealed to me. My father's money is a terrible responsibility."

"A husband would relieve you, my dear, of that responsibility."

As he spoke Jane's eyes wandered once more to the clock.

"I am expecting a young man at four. He has applied for the post of confidential secretary. As my father's friend, as our friend and banker, is it too much to ask you to see him?"

Lord Pendragon assured Jane that it would be a privilege.

"I shall leave you before he comes. I shall be in the next room. I want you to talk to him. I want your honest opinion of him as a man. He has worked for a well-known firm of actuaries, and I—mother and I—thought that he might deal honestly and faithfully with all the appeals that are made to us. Your opinion of him would carry weight with us."

"Delighted to help your mother and you."

"You will see him first?"

"Certainly."

"If—if he satisfies you that he can relieve us of these ever-increasing responsibilities, you can tell me so, and then I will see him."

"You are a very sensible young woman."

"Thank you. He has just come."

Jane escaped as Judkins threw open the door and announced majestically: "Mr. Tollerfield, my lord."

VIII.

WITHIN ten minutes Lord Pendragon delivered to Mrs. and Miss Timpany a considered verdict. He spoke with lowered tone of voice, inasmuch as Mr. Tollerfield was in the next room.

"I am satisfied with this young man. His credentials, apart from those he carries in his pocket, are printed in indelible ink

When the astounded John beheld Jane, he said, gaspingly: "You? *Here?*"

upon a singularly prepossessing face. I say emphatically—'Accept his services.'"

"You think him incapable of betraying a trust?"

"I do. And I am seldom mistaken in my judgments of men."

Mrs. Timpany observed with dignity: "I knew his mother. She was my friend."

"I will see Mr. Tollerfield," said Jane, slowly. "Whilst I am seeing him, my mother will explain to you why I shall never go in to dinner ahead of the duchesses."

IX.

WHEN the astounded John beheld Jane his quick wits for the moment failed him. It did not occur to him that Jane was Miss Timpany. He said, gaspingly:—

"You? *Here?*"

He admitted afterwards that his first overwhelming conviction was that his humble friend had pulled Fortune's strings.

"Yes," replied Jane, softly. "I am here. Lord Pendragon is with Mrs. Timpany. You appear to have satisfied him. All that you wanted appears to be yours."

"*All?*" asked John, eagerly.

"Perhaps—more than you bargained for."

But the sign had been given and accepted as such. Jane found herself in a lover's arms. Presently he said, wonderingly: "By some extraordinary coincidence, you are, of course, Mrs. Timpany's companion?"

"Oh, dear, I—I thought you had guessed!"

He glanced from her face to her frock.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed, vehemently, as illumination descended on him.

She smiled at him reassuringly.

"My man must never say that."

THE BEST PICTURE GALLERY IN THE WORLD

THE CENTENARY OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY

by

FRANK RUTTER

The pictures illustrating this article have been selected as examples of those which the other great galleries of the world would be most delighted to possess.

A HUNDRED years ago the National Gallery did not exist, and England possessed no public collection of pictures belonging to the State. In those days professional students and amateurs of art who wished to familiarize themselves with the work of the Old Masters, unless they had access to some notable private collection, were compelled to go abroad, for then, as now, Paris, Dresden, Madrid, Rome, Florence, Petrograd, and other European cities had famous art galleries which owed their origin to the collections formed by kings and princes.

It is no mystery why England was long behind other countries in the matter of art. The valuable collection of pictures formed by Charles I. was dispersed under the Commonwealth, and so was lost what might have been the precious nucleus of a national collection. The sovereigns who succeeded that unhappy monarch were not distinguished by any passionate love of art, and it was not till after the foundation of the Royal Academy in the reign of George III. that the educated classes slowly awakened to a feeling that it was a disgrace for a civilized country to possess no public gallery of art.

The wonder is not that London had no National Gallery in 1824, but that in so short a time as one hundred years it should have succeeded in getting together as fine a collection of Old Masters as that which any other capital contains. The story of the building up of the great treasure-house in Trafalgar Square is a romance and an achievement of which Englishmen may justly feel proud.

The prime agitator in the movement for establishing a British art collection was the famous connoisseur, Sir George Beaumont, the pupil of Richard Wilson, the friend of Reynolds, and the patron of Constable. Beaumont, with characteristic astuteness, felt that the psychological moment had arrived in 1823 when John Julius Angerstein, one of the most famous collectors of the eighteenth century, died at the great age of eighty-eight, and directed in his will that the pictures in his house in Pall Mall should be sold.

Angerstein himself had a remarkable career. A Russian by birth, he came to London as a boy of fifteen with small means and small prospects, but, beginning as an underwriter at Lloyd's, he soon showed exceptional business abilities, and afterwards amassed a great fortune as a merchant and banker. He was a generous patron of the

arts, and, under the guidance of Benjamin West and Sir Thomas Lawrence, he formed a choice collection of thirty-eight pictures, among them being works by Titian, Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Claude. These pictures formed an admirable nucleus for a national collection, and the Government was urged to purchase them for that purpose.

"Buy this collection of pictures for the nation," said Sir George Beaumont to Lord Liverpool, then Prime Minister, "and I will add mine." Beaumont himself possessed a fine collection of landscapes by Claude, as well as good examples of Rembrandt, Rubens, and Canaletto, so that his generous offer lent additional weight to his advice, and even an economical statesman could no longer hesitate.

JOHN JULIUS ANGERSTEIN,

One of the most famous collectors of the eighteenth century, whose choice collection of thirty-eight pictures formed the nucleus of the National Gallery.

On the 23rd March, 1824, Lord Liverpool announced to his colleagues in the Cabinet that he had decided to secure Angerstein's collection for the nation. Parliament voted a special grant of £57,000 for the purpose, and so the "British National Gallery of Pictures" came into being.

In 1924 the National Gallery possesses more than 3,600 pictures; it began its career in 1824 with thirty-eight, and it had no place in which to hang them. The pictures were left in Mr. Angerstein's house in Pall Mall—which occupied a part of the site on which the Reform Club now stands—and they were entrusted to the care of a very modest establishment. Mr. Seguier, a picture cleaner and restorer, was appointed Keeper at a salary of £200 a year, and his staff consisted of a doorkeeper, two porters, and one housemaid!

Sir George Beaumont was as good as his word and added his own to the Angerstein collection. It was a real sacrifice, for his pictures meant much to him, and in the end he could not bring himself to part with his favourite Claude—the "Landscape with Figures" (No. 61), also known as "The Annunciation" or "The Angel Appearing to Hagar"—and asked to be allowed to keep this in his possession until his death. Accordingly it was not till 1828 that this picture was placed with the three other paintings by Claude presented by Beaumont two years earlier. These, added to the five Claudes in the Angerstein collection—which included the superb "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" and "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca"—made up a group of unsurpassed excellence. Already it could be said

Angerstein's collection of pictures in their original home in Pall Mall.

that this great artist, generally regarded as the "Father of Landscape Painting," was better represented in London than in the national collection of his own country, France.

During the first twenty years of its existence little progress was made with the National Gallery. No fund was provided for buying pictures, all purchases being left to the Treasury, and this system, whereby politicians advised by amateurs were responsible for all additions to the collection, soon proved to be unsatisfactory. One glorious purchase, however, was made in 1826, when the Trustees secured Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," which, according to the late Sir Edward Poynter, is, "in its combination of all the qualities which go to make a great work of art, possibly the finest picture in the world." But generally speaking the early policy of the Trustees was "penny wise, pound foolish." About 1850 there was an opportunity to purchase Michael Angelo's "Madonna and Child" for £500. The owner, Lord Taunton, was offered £250, which he refused. In 1870 the picture was bought for £2,000. In 1848 the Trustees missed a chance of buying the whole of the Pitti Collection at Florence for an insignificant sum.

"Bacchus and Ariadne." By Titian (c. 1477-1576).

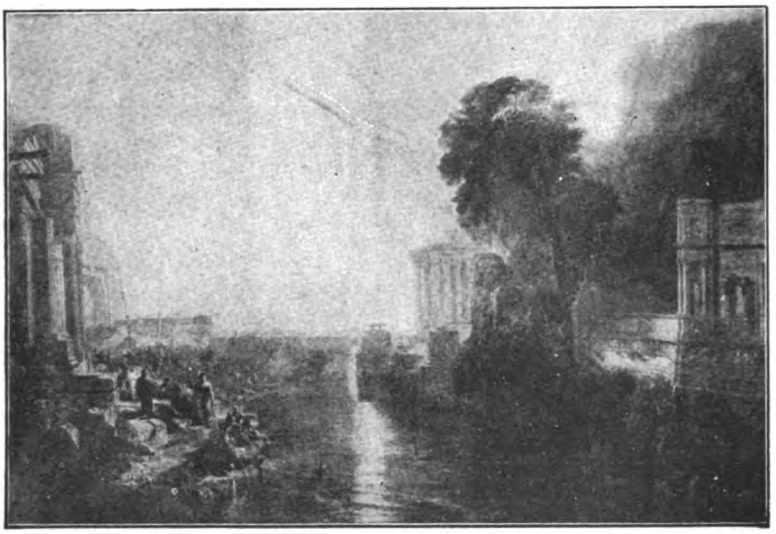
"Possibly the finest picture in the world," said the late Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., of this painting, which, acquired in 1826, was one of the first and one of the happiest purchases ever made by the National Gallery.

The Trustees did not do those things which they ought to have done, and—worse still—they did things which they ought not to have done. A commonplace German painting was bought as a Holbein in 1845, and John Ruskin indignantly declared that "the veriest tyro might have been ashamed of such a purchase." Nevertheless the collection had increased to some 200 works, having been enriched by two dozen purchases as well as by private donations and bequests. The most important of the last was the Rev. W. Holwell Carr's collection, which included Rembrandt's "Woman Bathing," Titian's "Holy Family," and Tintoretto's "St. George and the Dragon."

To give some idea of what the National Gallery was like in those days it may be mentioned that, in addition to the works already mentioned, the collection included Titian's "Venus and Adonis," Rembrandt's "Adoration of the Shepherds" and "The Woman Taken in Adultery," Rubens's "Rape of the Sabines"—all from the Angerstein Collection—Sir George Beaumont's great Rubens landscape, "The Chateau de Steen," Correggio's "Mercury Instructing Cupid," bought from Lord Londonderry in 1834, Murillo's "St. John and the Lamb," bought in 1840, Francia's great altar-piece for the Buonvici Chapel (1841), Van Eyck's "Arnolfini and His Wife" (1842), and Bellini's "Doge Leonardo Loredano," bought from Beckford in 1844.

These pictures, many of which are still among those most esteemed in the collection, show that the first twenty years of the institution were by no means fruitless,

and it seems to me as uncalled for as it was cruel for Ruskin about this time to have denounced the English National Gallery as "an European jest." A good start had been made, though, of course, the collection could not as yet be compared with those in famous Continental museums.



"Dido Building Carthage." By J. M. W. Turner, R.A. (1775-1851).

The artist believed this picture and "The Sun Rising Through Vapour" to be his two greatest achievements, and bequeathed them to the National Gallery on condition that they should be hung in perpetuity beside Claude's "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" and "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca."

Meanwhile the collection had been housed in the building in Trafalgar Square, designed by William Wilkins, R.A., and opened to the public in 1838. Originally the National Gallery was limited to the west wing of the building, the Royal Academy occupying the east wing. From the first the appearance of the building was subject to adverse criticism, and to this was added dissatisfaction with the administration.

In 1853 the House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the general system of management of the National Gallery, and as a result of its investigations important reforms were effected. All responsibility for the purchase of pictures was now vested in one person, the Director, and while the Trustees were retained as an advisory board, the decision of the Director was to be final in all cases of difference of opinion. Sir Charles Eastlake, who had previously been Keeper, was appointed the first Director at a salary of £1,000 a year, and an annual grant of £10,000 was made for the purchase of pictures.

Henceforward the National Collection rapidly increased in numbers and importance. Sir Charles Eastlake wisely devoted himself to building up the representation of the Italian Schools, giving his first attention to the great artists of the Renaissance, but by no means neglecting the earlier Italian masters. The beginning of a series of shrewd acquisitions from Italy was the purchase in 1857 of the Lombardi-Baldi Collection. Some twenty-eight paintings were obtained for £7,035, and among them were Uccello's "Rout of San Romano," the great Orcagna triptych, "The Coronation of the Virgin," Cimabue's "Madonna," Bennozzo Gozzoli's "Rape of Helen," Botticelli's "Adoration of the Magi," and Lorenzodi Credi's "Madonna and Child." It was a priceless collection of primitive paintings, and probably the best bargain the National Gallery ever made.

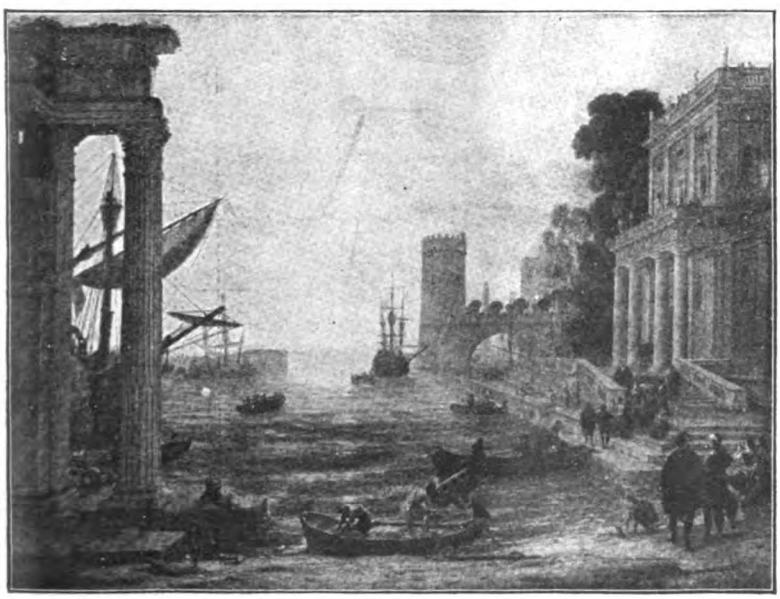
In ten years Sir Charles Eastlake added 164 pictures to the collection; among them, in addition to those mentioned above, were "The Family of Darius," by Paul Veronese; Raphael's "Madonna and Child with St. John"; and Moroni's "Portrait of a Tailor." During this period the National Gallery was further increased by the magnificent bequest of J. M. W. Turner, who, on his death in 1851, bequeathed to the nation more than a hundred of his oil paintings and some nineteen thousand drawings and water-colours, the sole condition being that his "Dido Building Carthage" and "The Sun Rising Through Vapour" should be hung in perpetuity beside Claude's "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba" and "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca," in unending rivalry for the supremacy in landscape painting.

In 1866 Sir Charles Eastlake was succeeded by Sir William Boxall, who, while generally continuing the same policy, made his greatest *coup* when, in 1871, he persuaded Mr. Gladstone's Government to buy the Peel Collection for £75,000. It is to the collection of this statesman, famous as the repealer of the Corn Laws, that the National

Gallery owes the most beautiful Dutch pictures—apart from the Rembrandts—which it possesses, and Sir William Gregory, one of the Trustees of the Gallery, in proposing the vote for the special grant in the House of Commons, eloquently observed that "it was gratifying to see that the taste of the amateur was on a par with the sagacity of the Minister."

Among Sir Robert Peel's seventy-eight pictures were Hobbema's "Avenue," perhaps the most popular landscape in the world; De Hooch's "Interior of a Dutch House" and "Courtyard of a Dutch House," Terborch's "Guitar Lesson," and the most beautiful of our Rubens portraits—that of Susanne Fourment, known as "Le Chapeau de Paille." No fewer than fifty-five of the Peel pictures belonged to the Dutch School, and since these reached an exceptionally high level of excellence, it could now be said that the art of Holland was worthily represented for the first time in a gallery which hitherto had concentrated on Italian art.

While Sir William Boxall thus broadened the basis of the National Gallery by giving more attention to the work of the Northern schools, he did not neglect the Italian masters. An example of his care in this direction was his astute acquisition in 1868 of the famous "Demidoff Altar-piece," consisting of thirteen panels in three tiers, by Carlo Crivelli. This fifteenth-century Venetian painter was already represented in the Gallery by his "Madonna and Child Enthroned," purchased in 1862, and by "The Annunciation," presented in 1864 by Lord Taunton. The last is still one of the most charming and justly popular of the early Venetian pictures. It was painted in 1486 for the Convent of the Annunciata, Ascoli—that is why the patron saint Emidius kneels by the side of the Angel Gabriel, holding in his hands a model of Ascoli. A delightful human touch is given by the little girl who peeps round the corner on the left, while the richness of the architectural and other accessories gives us a splendid idea of the magnificence of a fifteenth-century Italian city. With these two fine paintings and two other works by Crivelli already in the Gallery, the purchase of the Demidoff Altar-piece was eminently desirable because it represented quite another aspect of the painter's art. In 1870 the Marchioness of Westminster presented Crivelli's "Madonna with Saints Francis and Sebastian," and four years later his "Immaculate Conception" was purchased from the Barker Collection. The result is that to-day not even in Venice itself can be seen so fine a group of paintings by Crivelli as that which the National Gallery possesses.



"Seaport: Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba." By Claude (1600-1682).

One of the thirty-eight pictures in the Angerstein Collection with which the National Gallery was founded, and generally considered to be the supreme masterpiece of the painter who is considered to be the "Father of Landscape Painting."

Another rare fifteenth-century Italian painter, superbly represented in the National Gallery, is Piero della Francesca. His "Baptism of Christ" was bought by Eastlake in 1861; "The Nativity" was purchased in 1874. Few Italian masters have a more important place in the history of painting than Piero, who was one of the pioneers of realism and anticipated the landscape painters of the nineteenth century in his endeavour to show how atmosphere changes colour impressions. While the

kneeling Madonna and the attendant choir of angels in "The Nativity" are among the most delightful things in Italian art, while the group of Joseph and the Shepherds shows the power of the master, our eyes are drawn, above all, to the surprising effect of light and shadow on the cattle-shed and to the exquisite vistas of landscape on either side.

In 1874, the year when "The Nativity" was purchased, Boxall was succeeded by Sir Frederick Burton, to whom, more perhaps than any other Director, the present complexion of the National Gallery is due. During the twenty years of his directorship the collection rapidly increased in numbers and importance. While Italian purchases still preponderated, other schools received due recognition, for the taste of Burton was as catholic as it was cultured and refined. While ahead of his time in his appreciation of those early Italian masters known as the Primitives, he had the courage and good sense to recognize what was good among the works of the eighteenth century, when the art of Italy generally had fallen into decadence. It is to Burton we owe the most popular late-Italian painting in the National Gallery, "Rhinoceros in an Arena," by Pietro Longhi (1702–1785), an accomplished and entertaining picture of contemporary life and manners, purchased in 1881.

Burton's boldest stroke was the purchase of two pictures from the Duke of Marlborough's collection: Raphael's "Ansidei Madonna" and Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I., for £87,500. Nowadays we are accustomed to hear of an American collector paying a six-figure price for a single picture, but in the 'eighties the sum asked for these two pictures from Blenheim was considered to be sensational. The purchase was actually effected by Lord Salisbury's Government in 1885, but the bargaining with the Duke of Marlborough had been done in the preceding year by the previous Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, who once told Sir E. T. Cook that he "saved the taxpayers £45,000 on this Raphael by not listening to the advice of the Director of the Gallery."

When Sir Frederick Burton was asked to value the two pictures, his enthusiasm led him to declare that artistically they were priceless, and in his opinion it would not be extravagant to pay £115,000 for the Raphael and £31,500 for the Van Dyck. Mr. Gladstone's economic conscience was shocked at these figures, and he took the negotiations into his own hands, with the result that the Duke of Marlborough eventually agreed to accept £70,000 for the Raphael and £17,500 for the Van Dyck. Even so the "Ansidei Madonna"—so called because it was originally painted by Raphael in 1506 for the Ansidei family of Perugia—remains the costliest picture purchased by the British Government, and the curious may like to know that the

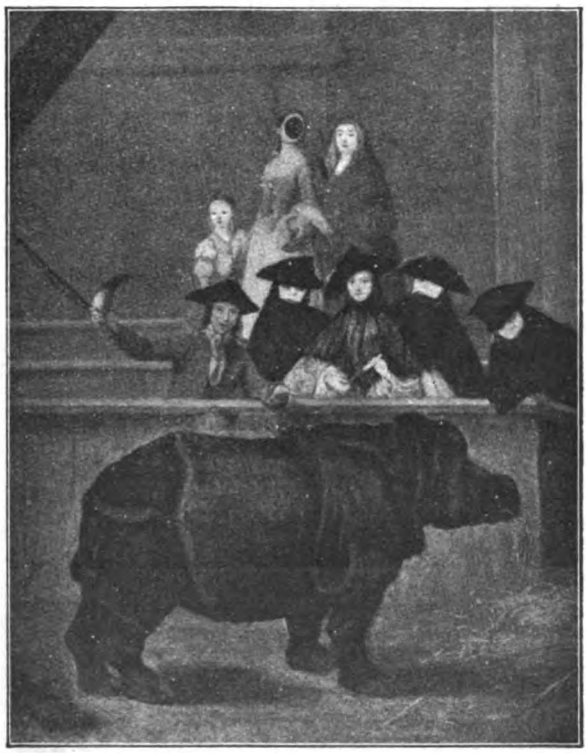
"The Nativity." By Piero della Francesca (c.1416-1492).

One of the finest existing examples of the rare fifteenth-century Italian painter who was a pioneer of realism in his endeavour to depict atmospheric and light-and-shade effects.

price works out at over £14 per square inch.

During one of his last visits to the National Gallery, John Ruskin stood long before the "Ansidei Madonna," and gave as his verdict that it was "quite the loveliest Raphael in the world." Before then the great critic had publicly withdrawn his scornful remark about the collection being "an European jest," and in 1888 it had so grown that he was moved to say with all sincerity that the National Gallery was "without question now the most important collection of paintings in Europe for the purpose of the general student."

One unfortunate result of the purchases from the Duke of Marlborough was that the annual grant to the Gallery was suspended for a time, and when renewed it was reduced to £5,000. Obviously the collection could never have obtained its present rank had not this meagre grant been supplemented from time to time. In 1890 Burton made his second big *coup* by purchasing for £55,000 three famous pictures from Longford Castle: Holbein's "Ambassadors," Moroni's "Italian Nobleman," and "Admiral Pulido-Pareja," generally attributed to Velazquez, though thought by some to be a studio work by Pareja. Towards this purchase the Government only gave £25,000, the remaining £30,000 being contributed by Messrs. Rothschild, Lord Iveagh, and Mr. Charles Cotes.



"Rhinoceros in an Arena."
By Pietro Longhi (1702-1785).

An intimate and accomplished picture of the manners and costume of the eighteenth century by one of the last of the Venetian masters.

Meanwhile the increasing number of pictures demanded an extension of wall space. In 1869 the Royal Academy moved to Burlington House, thus giving to the National Gallery the east as well as the west wing of the building. In 1876 a new wing, designed by E. M. Barry, was added, and the staircase and vestibules, designed by Sir John Taylor, were completed between 1885 and 1887. More recently five new rooms were built on the west side and opened in 1911.

Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., who succeeded Sir Frederick Burton on his retirement in 1894, rather unwisely limited his own powers as Director, and in some measure reverted to the policy of "purchase by committee," which hampered progress between 1824 and 1853. His directorship had few notable features beyond the strengthening of the Italian schools. One of his earliest and happiest acquisitions was "The Vision of St. Eustace," by Antonio Pisano (also called Pisanello), a naive picture of the early fifteenth century dear to every lover of animals. Whether the saint depicted is St. Eustace or St. Hubert is a question still debated, but the legend illustrated is clearly enough that of a huntsman who, after seeing a vision of the Crucifix between the antlers of a stag, vowed to chase no more animals, and to devote himself to a saintly life. Pisano was chiefly famed as a medallist, and his paintings are exceedingly scarce; in no other gallery in the world can we see a more charming example of his power to give life and movement to animals.

The crowning achievement of Sir Edward Poynter's *régime* was his purchase in 1904 of Titian's famous "Ariosto" with the help of £21,000 contributed by six private benefactors towards the purchase price. In 1906 Sir Edward Poynter was succeeded by Sir Charles Holroyd, whose short directorship was distinguished by several additions of the highest importance. By this time the inadequacy of the Government grant to save our finest art treasures from going out

of the country had been generally recognized, and the National Art Collections Fund was founded in 1903 with the object of rescuing by private generosity important works of art for our national collections. With the help of this body Holbein's "Duchess of Milan" was added to the National Gallery in 1906, and the Rokeby Velazquez, "Venus and Cupid," in 1909. After the death of Sir Charles Holroyd, he was succeeded by the present Director, Sir C. J. Holmes, the eminent landscape painter, among whose many achievements a foremost place should be given to his filling, with the help of the National Art Collections Fund, the last remaining gap of serious importance in our representation of Italian art. One of the giants of the Renaissance was Massaccio (1401-1428), whose remarkable art powerfully influenced Michael Angelo and his contemporaries. Since he died at the early age of twenty-seven and was principally occupied in painting frescoes on walls, paintings by Massaccio are as rare as they are precious, and the purchase in 1916 of his "Madonna and Child," the centre of an altar-piece for the Carmine, Pisa, mentioned by the sixteenth-century art historian Vasari, was a stroke of extraordinary good fortune and good judgment.

"The Vision of St. Eustace." By Antonio Pisano (c.1397-1455).

Dating from the infancy of European painting, before artists had mastered the science of perspective, this picture is remarkable for its naive but life-like rendering of animals in movement. Pisano was chiefly famed as a medallist, and his paintings are exceedingly scarce.

This purchase and many others would have been impossible but for the pecuniary bequests which have been made from time to time to the National Gallery. Of these bequests, the interest of which now amounts to £4,661 a year, the more important have been £10,000 from Mr. T. D. Lewis in 1863, £23,104 from Mr. Francis Clarke in 1881, and £99,909 from Colonel Temple West in 1907. Gifts of pictures have been still more numerous, and in recent years the National Gallery has been enriched by Sir Henry Layard, whose collection further strengthened our Italian section and gave two characteristic works, notably "St. Ursula Leaving Her Father," by Carpaccio (1450-1522), a master hitherto unrepresented at Trafalgar Square; and by Mr. George Salting. It was the distinction of Mr. Salting to have been an acute admirer both of the Old Masters and of modern painters; his pictures by Corot and others of the Barbizon School were particularly welcome because the National Gallery was at one time woefully weak in examples of French painting. French art is so splendidly represented in the Wallace Collection that we have not felt this defect as much as we should, but the present Director has been conscious of it and has worked hard to remove the reproach.

It is not the least of his triumphs that while the war was still raging, in March, 1918, Sir C. J. Holmes persuaded Mr. Lloyd George's Government to make a timely grant which enabled the Director to secure some worthy examples of great French painters of the nineteenth century who had previously been unrepresented in the National Gallery.

It is true that French painting is still the weak spot of the National Gallery, but it is better represented there than British painting is in the Louvre at Paris. Little mention

has been made in this article of English painting, because it would be disgraceful indeed were not our own painters better represented in the capital of England than in any other gallery in the world. The splendour with which British painting is represented in the National Gallery is an undisputed fact on which there is no need to enlarge, but we have cause for special congratulation in observing that though Constable was sooner appreciated in France than in England, though "The Hay-Wain" was originally bought by a Frenchman and created a sensation when it was shown in the Paris Salon of 1824, though this picture helped to revolutionize landscape painting in France, yet it found its way back to England and, passing into the hands of Henry Vaughan, was given by him, with other splendid Constables, to the National Gallery in 1886.

"The Hay-Wain." By John Constable (1776-1837).

Originally bought by a Frenchman and exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1824, where it created a profound sensation and subsequently revolutionized French landscape painting, this picture eventually returned to England and was presented to the National Gallery in 1886.

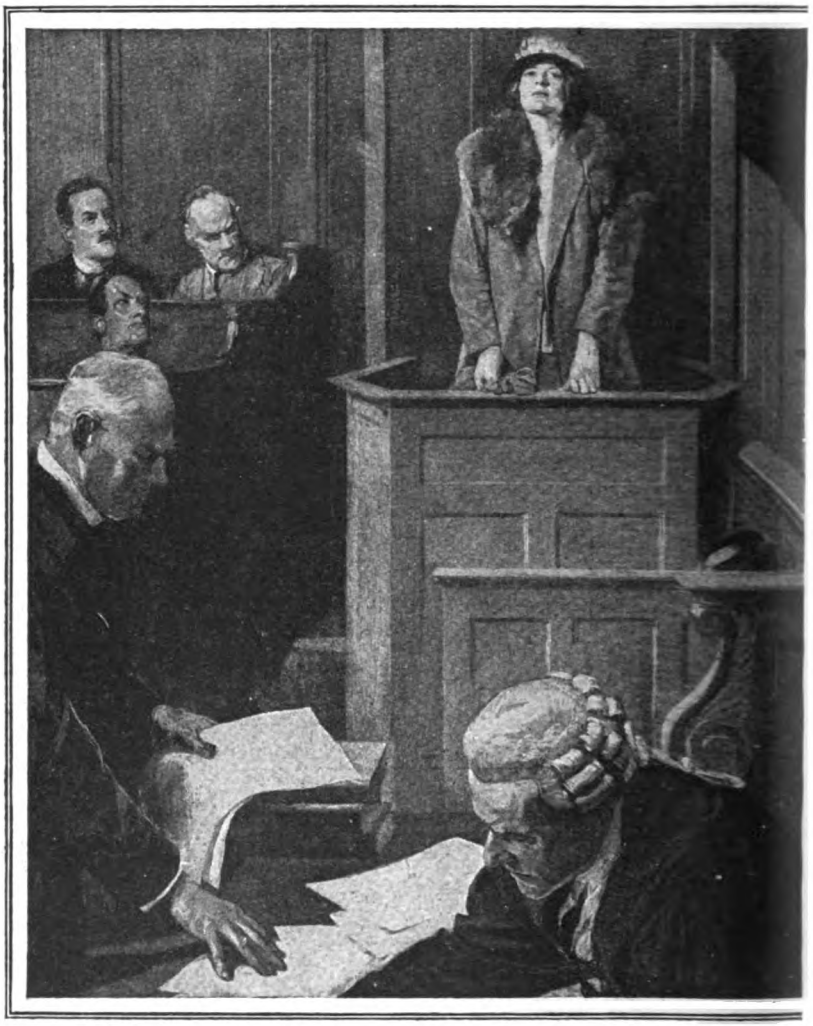
What Ruskin said of the National Gallery in 1888 can be repeated to-day with added force and justification. Of a certainty there is no one other art gallery in the world where the history of European painting from the beginning of the fourteenth to the close of the eighteenth century is illustrated with so near an approach to perfection. To learn what the art of Giotto was we must still go to Padua, Assisi, or Florence; to see the full might of Michael Angelo we must enter the Sistine Chapel at Rome; but outside Florence nowhere can Florentine art be studied with more profit than at the National Gallery, outside Italy there is no better collection of Italian painting than that housed in Trafalgar Square.

To perceive the full splendour of Velazquez we must journey to Madrid, though in the "Venus and Cupid" we possess a unique work different from any there, while our "Philip IV. When Elderly" is one of the finest of his bust portraits; but outside Spain our collection of Spanish painting is as good as any. The gay bravery of Frans Hals is only fully revealed at Haarlem, the unrivalled exquisiteness of Vermeer can be best appreciated in the Mauritzhuis at The Hague; but outside Holland it would not be easy to find a choicer selection of Dutch paintings than that which we possess.

Churlish indeed would it be not to recognize that other art galleries have their own distinctions and their own peculiar glories, but the better we know the great Continental art galleries the finer appreciation should we be able to give to our own. In mere numbers our collection at Trafalgar Square is outstripped by several of the other great galleries of the world, but in none is the *average excellence* of the pictures so extraordinarily high, in none is the balance between the various national schools so evenly and justly maintained.

Not only do the contents of the National Gallery impress foreign visitors by their intrinsic merit and importance, but also by their condition and by their arrangement. Readers who are familiar with the dulled surfaces of pictures in many of the Continental galleries will share the universal admiration for the splendid condition of our art treasures.

In view of the condition and arrangement of the works, then, as well as of their quality and range, we may surely be acquitted of boastfulness if we hold that in the National Gallery we possess the best picture gallery in the world.

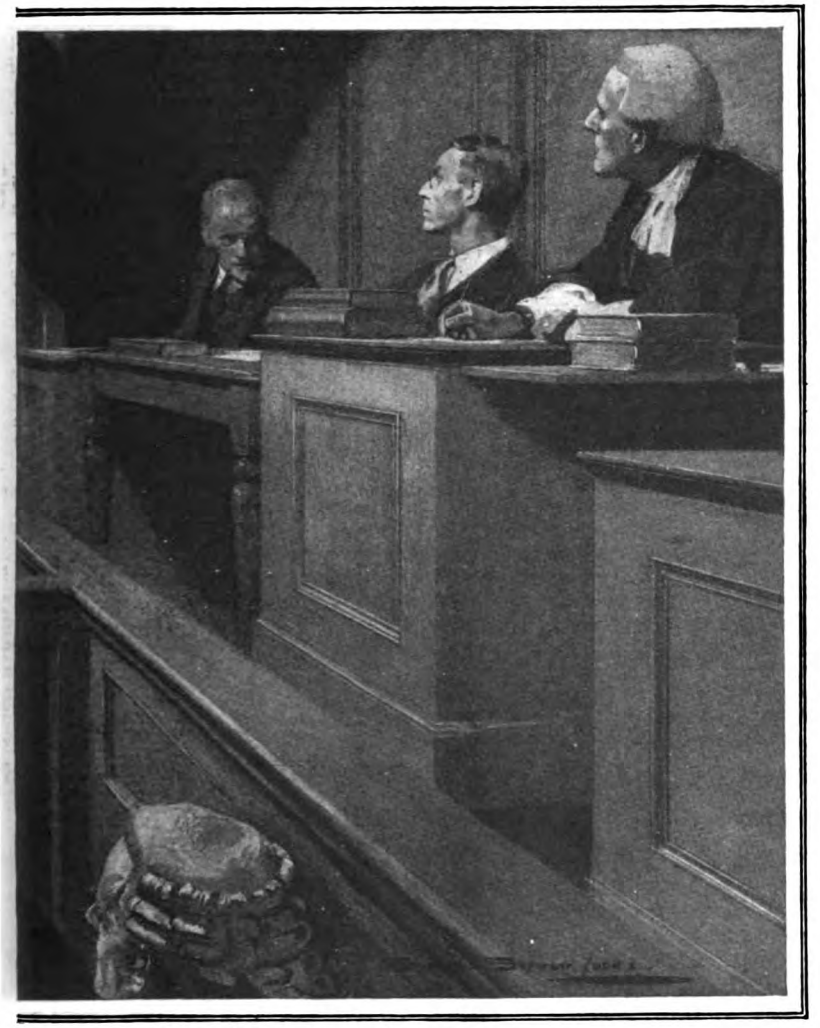


Step by step, clearly, without

THE WITNESS

THE winter evening had darkened behind the drawn blinds and the softly-shaded electric lamps of the luxurious bedroom were alight as Letitia Brand went, with a feverish, trembling haste, to and fro between the pulled-out drawers of the wardrobe and the half-packed suit-case open on an adjacent chair. She moved like one under the fierce impulsion of a fixed idea that dare risk no pause for the emergence of other thoughts. The white-faced figure in severely simple coat and skirt that passed and re-passed, coincident with her, in the mirror scarcely

Copyright, 1924, by F. Britten Austin.



equivocation, she told her story—all of it.

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

evoked a recognition of identity as her glance encountered it. It was like a tragic ghost of herself. But she checked for no self-pitying contemplation. With hands that shook, she laid quickly article after article in the suit-case, drawing her breath in little gasps through clenched teeth over which her lips quivered tremulously, forcing back all thoughts but one. She was going!

She was going! In little more than an hour—"seven-forty-five, Continental platform," he had said—she would be at Victoria Station; in—how long?—how long would the divorce take?—she would

cease to be Mrs. Brand. She would be Mrs. Tregarthen. Here, yet on the hither side of that Rubicon, the prospect seemed incredible, impossible. But it would be the fact. She could still feel the clasp of his arms around her, the pressure of his kiss upon her lips. She had no doubt of him. He was throwing everything to the winds for her.

As she packed, she forced herself to remember that—forced herself to remember how, with all the eager vitality of her twenty-seven years, she had craved for love—forced herself to remember the heart-frozen certitude that Stephen did not love her which she had acquired in three years of lonely brooding. Stephen—it was now four days since she had last seen him; he was living at his rooms in the Temple as, when the Courts were sitting, he so often did for weeks at a stretch, working far into the night on his cases with that fierce concentration of all his mind which made him the most formidable prosecuting K.C. an unhappy prisoner could have to face—Stephen would not care, would hardly miss her. He lived for his work alone, utterly absorbed in it. He would go straight on in his career without a pang, in that career which would in nowise be affected by her flight. She imagined the sympathetic tact of the judge when his petition for divorce—undefended—came on for hearing; imagined him—freed—hurriedly putting on wig and gown again and hastening to the other court where a junior had been carrying on for him during his brief absence; imagined the stir in the court when, perfect master of himself, grim and incisive, triumphant in advance, he arose to address the jury. Not for a moment would he falter.

HOW different from Maurice! She shut down the suit-case, went to the mirror to put on her hat, chiding herself for the incomplete warming of her heart at the summoned-up image of the other. He was staking everything on her love. The scandal would mean political death for him, that was certain—she had urged it desperately, fighting against herself, while he had held her in his arms that afternoon. He had laughed with that wild, fascinating recklessness which could take possession of him, had told her that his career was already finished—that the seat in the Cabinet prophesied for him by the knowing ones had that day been definitely refused to him. It was in vain that she had begged him to have patience for a chance that would surely come. He had finished with it, he said—and then, his handsome young face almost hypnotizingly close to hers in the ardour of his passion, a passion whose deep, all-consuming genuineness she could not doubt, he had entreated her, supplicated her—become desperate, sworn to kill himself in the wreck of all his life if she did not escape with him at once—what was there to wait for?—he could not, would not, wait another day. To-morrow (and the teeth-clenched sincerity of his tone had frightened her), either they would be together in France or he would be dead. She remembered the story whispered of his father—the brilliant politician who had shot himself at the height of his career because of some woman—it was in the blood, evidently—and the responsibility overwhelmed her, allying itself with all the temptation of her starved soul. Why shouldn't she—why shouldn't she give happiness to this man who needed her, who craved for her with all his being—when *the other* needed her not at all—why should she not give herself the unknown magic ecstasy of a man's adoring love? She might herself in time come to love him as he loved her. Her present life she could stand no longer. She had reached breaking-point. These thoughts had swept through her in a sort of delirious dream as he held her tight, beseeching her, kissing her against her will. She hardly knew now in what words she had consented—promised. As she adjusted her hat, the gleam of her wedding-ring in the mirror caught her eye. She wrenched it from her finger, pressed it instinctively to her lips before her conscious mind could interpose with its perception of the incongruity of the caress, dropped it into the tray upon her dressing-table. She would not go with *his* ring upon her hand. She turned, ready to depart, her soul bleak, her body quivering.

In that moment, before she had moved a step, she saw, with a shock of alarm, the door opening towards her. Who was it? She had sent her maid off for the evening! The door came further open. It was—massively well-built in his evening-dress, a smile on his somewhat heavily-moulded, clean-shaven features—Stephen! Paralysis held her.

He came towards her, smiling cheerfully, a newspaper in his hand.

"Hullo, Letty! I've had to knock off for an hour or two to-night to take the chair at a confoundedly important dinner, so I thought I'd just look in to see how you're getting on."

She stared at him speechlessly. He went on:—

"D'you know our friend Tregarthen has got his seat in the Cabinet? It's in the evening papers. Here you are. I thought it would interest you. Splendid, isn't it? I've sent him a wire."

His heartily gratulatory tone was innocent

of any trace of suspicion. He personally liked Tregarthen, she knew. But the irony of this cordiality passed over her unperceived for the moment. She did not know how she managed to keep erect on her feet. Maurice—in the Cabinet! He had *known*, then, this afternoon—had flung it away for her! She was stunned at this revelation of his wild mad love, felt herself, more than ever, unequal to its all-consuming intensity. *No!* In a timeless fraction of an instant the decision formed itself in her as she stood staring at her husband. Flattering though it was to her, she would be no party to this madness! She must get at him somehow—stop him—stop him—send him back to his career.

And herself? She had gone through the pangs of the plunge. She would not go back—the ring lying on that dressing-table was the symbol of the irrevocable. She would go—where? She sought rapidly for alternatives in that moment's silence. She would go to her sister's! But she must get word to Maurice at once. She nodded jerkily.

"Yes, I had heard," she managed to say.

He glanced at her, fatuously blind to the turmoil that seethed behind her statue-like rigidity.

"You don't look very well, my dear. Have you just come in?"

Now was the moment! She would have no pretence with him, would be honest, since the challenge had arisen. She found her voice.

"No," she said. "I'm going out."

His brows puzzled at her.

"Going out? But where on earth are you going in a coat and skirt at this time of day?"

She met his eyes bravely.

"I'm going," she said, "for good."

He stared at her, comprehension eluding him.

"But, my dear," he said, "I don't understand."

"I'm going away from you, Stephen," she said, steadily "Leaving you."

"*Leaving* me?" His voice went suddenly sharp. She saw him change colour in the shock. "Letty—I don't understand! You can't mean what you are saying! Letty!" He sprang forward to her, caught both her shoulders in his strong hands, looked into her eyes. "*Letty!* You don't mean it! You can't mean it!"

She withstood the piercing scrutiny.

"I do mean it," she said. "Had you come five minutes later you would have found me gone. Please don't touch me!"

He ignored the icy appeal, continued to hold her, his face as she had never seen it.

"Gone?" he repeated. "Letty—I still can't understand—can't believe it. *Gone?* With whom were you going?"

"With no one," she replied. It was true—since she had heard his news—and at all costs Tregarthen must not be suspected. If only she could get away to warn him—the precious minutes were flying! "I am going to my sister's. Stephen!" Her voice was hard. "It is useless to try and stop me. I have made up my mind. If you want any further explanations, I will write them to you. Please let me pass."

"What?" he cried. "My God, no!"

"What difference can it make to you?" she flashed at him. "You don't love me."

He stared at her, still holding her. When he spoke, his voice was thick in his throat.

"Not love you? Not love you, Letty? My God, you're the only thing I care for in the world! I never realized it, perhaps, till this moment when——" He checked. "Take off that hat! I'll never let you go."

There was a silence in which she failed to achieve speech. Her head was whirling. Under the desperately-maintained frigidity of her exterior her heart leaped in her.

"Letty!" His eyes looked into hers. "Letty!" Then speech was choked in him also. He could only look—and swallow pitifully. From his quivering lips, from the lips of this strong man fluently adept in the use of words, came only an inarticulate sound—a sound of anguish beyond utterance.

Something broke in her, a barrier that had confined a torrent irresistible in its sudden release. It seemed to her that she was going to faint, and she found herself crushed in his arms, sobbing, sobbing hysterically against his coat, while his kisses came upon her hair.

"Letty! Letty darling!" he was saying. "I'll cancel this dinner to-night. I'll stop with you, and we'll talk it all out, and anything and everything that was wrong shall be put right. We're going to start fresh."

HIS words penetrated to her consciousness, evoked a swift alarm. Maurice! She must manage to get alone somehow—at once—to warn him! He would be sending in his resignation. He must be stopped, somehow, before he had done the irreparable. If she could only get a moment alone to telephone him! In the miraculous reprieve that had renewed her life—it seemed nothing less to her—she could not have the wreck of his career upon her conscience. She looked up at her husband, saw his eyes brimming with anxious tenderness upon her, drew away from him.

"No, Stephen," she said, hating herself for this desperately necessary equivocation.

" No. That dinner must have been important or you would not have given up your work for it. I want you to go—you *must* go—but make an excuse to come away early. When you come back, we'll talk it all out."

" And you will be here—you promise ? " he said, doubtfully. That dinner was confoundedly important, and he was in the chair.

" I promise," she assured him, smiling through a reminiscence of her tears.

" No ! " he said, gripped in a torturing perplexity. " I can't go—and leave you like this—now—when so nearly——" He could not bring himself to explicit reference to her narrowly thwarted flight. " Let me 'phone them—make an excuse."

She had regained a similitude of poise.

" Stephen," she said, " I have promised. You will find me here when you come back. But if you do not go I shall feel you do not trust me. Stephen, to please me, go—and come back as soon as you can. What time does it start ? "

He glanced at his watch.

" I ought to be there now. It is a quarter-past seven. These things begin early. You really want me to go ? "

" I do—really." A quarter-past seven ! She was desperate. " Really ! Stephen, don't let us start a new era in our lives by your breaking your word. You've never done that in your life. You must go. I insist. And I shall be here waiting for you when you come back."

He surrendered. A minute or two more when he clutched her close, kissed her as if he could never stop, while her heart seemed to be thumping out the irrecoverable seconds —while she was torn between her instinctive craving never to be loosed from his arms and her agony at the flight of time, the supreme necessity to get through to Maurice at once—and he was gone. She heard his car whir off down the street.

She ran to the telephone, asked a number, waited. No reply. The exchange tried for her again. No reply. Minute after minute was passing. It was twenty-one past. Probably Maurice would not wait longer than he could help at the station, would not leave his rooms in Jermyn Street till half-past. He would have sent Harrison in advance to attend to tickets and his luggage. He *must* be there ! That maddening telephone—she could almost have broken the instrument in her exasperation as she rattled at it—no reply—definitely, from the exchange, no reply ! Could she get there in eight minutes ? She fled down the stairs, opened the front door unseen by any of the servants—saw an empty taxi just passing. In a moment she was inside, was rushing along half-deserted streets, along a Piccadilly mercifully denuded of traffic.

AT the moment when Letitia Brand had wrenched the wedding-ring from her finger, Maurice Tregarthen, in his Jermyn Street rooms, was seated at his writing-table engaged in the composition of a letter which began, " My dear Prime Minister." From the adjacent room, whence for the past half-hour the sounds of drawers opening and shutting, of baggage thumping upon the floor as it was strapped, had proceeded, his man Harrison emerged.

" All ready, sir," he said.

Tregarthen looked up, his handsome face still frowning over the delicate phrasing demanded by the letter he had already recommenced several times, worrying with thumb and forefinger the clipped little dark moustache which was a reminiscence of military service. He nodded.

" All right, Harrison. I'll post this myself, when I follow you. Get the lift-man to help you down with the baggage and take it to Victoria. Register it through to Paris. And get two tickets to Paris—*not* Pullman this side—but I want two berths in the sleeping-car from Boulogne if possible. Meet me with the tickets on the Continental platform at seven-forty-five. You understand ? "

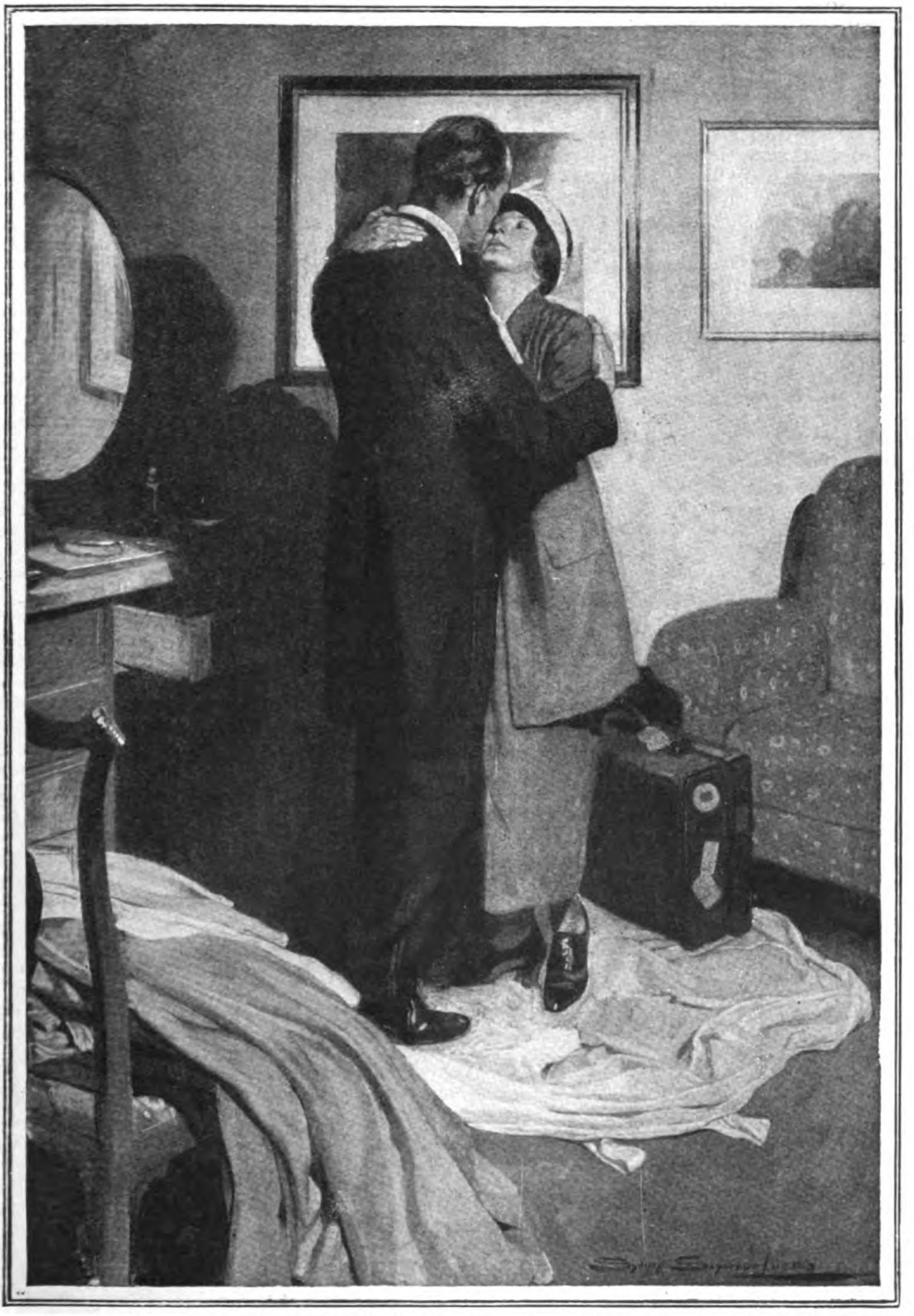
" Very good, sir."

" And you'll want some money." Tregarthen took from his breast-pocket the wad of five-pound notes for which he had managed to change a cheque at his club—the banks were already closed when Letty had gasped out that magic " Yes " which had metamorphosed his whole existence, given him the promise of that fiercely-hungered-for felicity for which for the past year he had craved with every fibre of his being, and beside which everything else was of no account. He was the type predestinate to reckless surrender to overwhelming passion ; the portrait of his father which looked down at him from the wall might almost have been his own. He thrilled with the sense of it as now he launched himself upon the preliminaries of that act which in an hour would be irrevocable. He handed Harrison two of the notes, left the wad lying for the moment on his desk.

" Very good, sir," said the impassible Harrison. " And further instructions, sir ? "

" I will write them to you. Hurry. You haven't much time."

He suspended the writing of his letter for the minute or two of disturbance during which Harrison, aided by the lift-man, removed his baggage ; resumed it when at length he heard the outer door slam. He glanced at his watch. It was a minute or two past seven. He had time. If he left



"Letty! Letty darling! We'll talk it all out, and anything and everything that was wrong shall be put right. We're going to start fresh."

at half-past, it would suffice. He shrank from being recognized on that platform in the interval before the train started—not on his own account, but on Letty's when she should join him. It was for that reason that he had eschewed the Pullman; the ordinary first-class carriage offered a comparative seclusion. Time enough for the scandal to start when they were far away.

He switched his mind back to the letter, was in the middle of a subtly tactful phrase when the bell of the telephone close to his hand shattered his thoughts. He picked up the receiver, listened, heard nothing, hung up again. Immediately the bell rang furiously. He listened once more, again heard nothing. Then he remembered that Harrison had told him that all the afternoon the bell had been ringing with no voice audible when he answered, that the instrument was out of order. Irritated, he left the receiver unhooked upon his desk, shielded himself from further annoyance. Then he re-addressed himself to his letter, finished it to his satisfaction, put it in an envelope, superscribed it. It was a quarter-past seven. Yet a quarter of an hour. He lit himself a cigarette.

THE sharp ringing of the outer door-bell startled him from his meditations. Who on earth was that? The ringing was repeated. He was alone in the flat. He would have to answer it himself. Should he ignore it? No; better see who it was.

He went out of the room to the little lobby which was his entrance-hall, opened the door on to the staircase. A young man, dressed with a pretence to elegance, stood on the threshold.

"Hullo, Maurice!" he said, familiarly. "Can I come in for a word with you?"

Tregarthen frowned. He had seen more than enough of this precious wastrel cousin of his. On two occasions he had already rescued Mr. Eric Norton from the hands of moneylenders, and he had vowed that the last occasion should be the last.

"No, you can't," he said, curtly. "I'm busy."

The young man smiled unpleasantly.

"Not too busy to discuss my business, I think, Maurice." His tone was insolently confident. "I advise you to, anyway."

"What's your business?" Tregarthen held the door against his entrance.

Mr. Eric Norton smiled leeringly, lowered his voice after a glance which assured him the staircase was empty.

"Do you remember a Mrs. Stapylton?"

Tregarthen did remember. Rather more than a year ago—before he had met Letty. His jaw went hard.

"Well, what about her?"

"I happen to possess a packet of very interesting letters you wrote to her. Doesn't matter how I got them." The young man grinned. "Before sending them to her husband I thought I'd come and have a little friendly chat with you. Produced in the Divorce Court, they would be rather awkward for a Cabinet Minister, you know." The young man grinned again. "And I see in to-night's papers——"

Tregarthen was silent in a shock of sharp alarm. Not on account of his political career—he had just written its requiem—but for Letty's sake—Letty, who would revolt from him, sickened and outraged—he must suppress those letters! He had no illusions about his cousin's utter unscrupulousness.

"Don't you think I had better come inside?" suggested the young man, maliciously triumphant. "The staircase is hardly the best place——"

Tregarthen flung the door open for his entrance.

"I give you five minutes," he said, harshly. "I have an appointment to keep." They went together into the room. "Now, then—how much?"

"That's the way to talk, Maurice." Tregarthen could have struck the grinning face. "Five hundred—a hundred cash down now and four hundred cash to-morrow—no cheques for me—they can be stopped too easily."

Tregarthen pondered. It was impossible. He had not been able to get more than a hundred from his club. He had only ninety left. He must keep some money for the journey.

"I'll give you fifty now—and my solicitors will pay the balance the day after to-morrow in exchange for the letters," he said, in disgust at himself.

"No good, Maurice. I've got to have a hundred to-night—I have to pay it away myself." The young man's grin was insolent. His glance strayed away to the table where still lay the wad of notes. "Why, you've got the money there!"

"Not enough." Tregarthen looked at his watch. It marked twenty-seven past! "Fifty is all you can have." His voice was sharp. "Be quick and decide. In three minutes I have to go."

The young man looked at him suspiciously.

"Give me all you have on the desk there, then," he said. "And the balance to-morrow."

"No! I'll give you fifty—and instruct my solicitors to pay the balance" repeated Tregarthen. He was getting desperate. The moments were flying. "That's all I can do——" He was interrupted by—once more—the sudden ringing of the

"I happen to possess a packet of very interesting letters you wrote to a Mrs. Stapylton. Before sending them to her husband I thought I'd come and have a little friendly chat with you."

door-bell. "Who the devil's that?" The ringing was repeated, evidently under a pressure of urgency. A telegram? "Wait here!" he said, and hurried out of the room.

Left alone, the young man looked around him, looked at the wad of notes upon the desk as though tempted to snatch them up, stayed his hand. He heard Tregarthen's voice in a sharp exclamation beyond the half-closed door, heard him say "One moment!"

The next instant Tregarthen had hastened back into the room. Before he quite knew what was happening, young Norton found himself seized by the collar and bundled through the open door of the bedroom. "Quiet! or I hand you over to the police for blackmail!" The low voiced threat had been uttered close to his ear in a tone that left no doubt of its sincerity. Before he could pick himself up from the floor to which he had been flung, he heard the key turn upon him.

Tregarthen darted back, opened the door to the lobby.

"Letty!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "What is it? Why have you come here? In another minute I should have been gone!"

She entered the room, her face white, panting still with her run upstairs. The lift had been at a higher floor. She had not waited for it.

"I—I tried to telephone you," she gasped. "I could not get through. Maurice! I—I've come to tell you I—I can't go."

"*Not go?*" he repeated, sharply. "Why—what's the matter? What has happened?"

She looked at him piteously.

"I—I just can't, Maurice—I—I've seen Stephen——" She broke off, shrinking from the cruelty of explanation.

"But—I don't understand—you mean that, after all, you don't—care for me enough?" His face had gone as white as hers. "My God, you can't mean that?" He gripped at a chair-back, and it shook under him.

She nodded, mutely distressed eyes upon his. Her heart was wrung for him.

"Yes," she managed to get out. "Don't—don't think too hardly of me, Maurice—I—I can't leave Stephen."

He put his hand up to his brows, covering his eyes. She wondered whether he were going to faint. The hand came down. He tried to speak, failed. She saw his lips move soundlessly.

"Maurice—forget it!" She spoke with a desperate desire to console. "You—you have your career—your career now fully open to you—in a month's time you will be glad—it was madness to throw it away as you tried to do this afternoon—I would never have consented, had I known——"

She broke off in the constraint of the awful anguish in the eyes that stared at her.

"What do I care for that?" he said, in a husky difficult voice she scarcely recognized. "Letty!—Letty!—I can't live without you!"

"I—I'm sorry—very sorry," was all she could say, feebly.

He seemed to recover a measure of control, to get a grip on himself.

"That's final, then?" he asked, curtly.

She nodded.

"Yes." It hurt her inexpressibly to pronounce the words. "Maurice, I—I want you not to see me again."

He looked at her.

"All right."

Something in his tone frightened her. "Maurice, you won't——?" Her eyes tried to search his, were baffled. She forced re-assurance upon herself, achieved a sort of smile at him. "I shall watch your career."

He nodded.

"Quite," he said, in a hard, lifeless voice. "But you ought not to stay here. You might be seen—compromised." He went across to the door, opened it for her.

SHE hesitated, looked about the room as though fearful it might contain some weapon that would tempt him. She saw none. Her glance fell upon the envelope on his desk, read its superscription. She picked it up, interrogated him with her eyes. It was the letter containing his resignation. His eyes admitted it.

"Maurice!" she said, timidly. "There's no need for this now—may I take it?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"As you like," he answered, in that hard, lifeless, indifferent voice. He still held the door open for her exit. She went towards it, passed through. "Good-bye," he said.

His tone overawed her. She could only respond, stupidly, "Good-bye."

She found herself once more on the staircase landing. His door shut with a snap behind her. Suddenly a terror gripped her. Certitude flashed in on her. She must go back to him—*stop him!* She jumped back to the door, seized the handle. At the same moment, from within, she heard a violent detonation. Too late! She had no doubt what it was.

She stared about her. The lift was still on the upper floor, out of sight. What should she do? Call for help?—And be found? *Disgrace Stephen?* That thought sprang up in her, terrifying her, dominating her. As it was, no one would connect her with the dreadful sight she visualized behind that door—she was safe! *Stephen's love was*

safe! In a blind instinctive determination to save that at all costs, she turned and ran swiftly down the stairs, crushing in her hand a letter the Prime Minister would never receive.

WITHIN the room where the blue smoke drifted lazily in a lengthening wisp above the man stretched upon the floor, there was, for a moment, silence. Then, from the bedroom, came a hammering at the door, a man's voice crying: "Let me out! Maurice! Let me out!"

There was no response.

The hammering at the door was resumed more fiercely, in a wild panic for release from that locked bedroom. "Maurice! Maurice! Let me out! Let me out, I say! What's happening in there? Let me out!" The reiterated cries received no answer.

Then, as though the prisoner were maddened in a sudden terror, heavy, thudding blows from a metal object began to rain upon a panel of the door. The panel cracked, splintered. The knob of a heavy steel poker broke through. A moment later the hole was big enough for a hand to be protruded, to reach for the key, to turn it. Young Norton emerged—stood, horrified, over the dead man.

"My God! I must clear out of this!" he muttered. He looked round to see if the money were still upon the desk. It was. He stuffed it into his pocket, dashed towards the door—stopped half-way.

Beyond that outer door he heard excitedly challenging voices, two or three of them, now shouting to him, now talking to each other.

"Who's that in there? Wait a minute—here's the policeman. Did you hear the shot? All right, I've got a key!" He could hear the clink of a bunch.

He stepped back, looked at the corpse, gasped. They would accuse him! He couldn't get out! In a blind panic he stooped, snatched up the revolver from the dead man's hand. The door was flung open. A policeman, the lift-man, two other men rushed in, hesitated for a moment at the sight of the weapon he levelled.

"Stand back!" he cried. "I didn't do it—I swear I didn't do it!"

The lift-man uttered a sharp cry, pointed to the body.

"Good God! It's Mr. Tregarthen!"

"Put down that revolver!" shouted the policeman, springing forward. The weapon detonated with a spurt of flame. Eric Norton went down under the weight of four men leaping upon him at once.

THE next evening Letitia Brand sat before a blazing fire in her drawing-room, staring into the dancing flames. Very soon now Stephen would be home to dinner—at a somewhat late hour for the meal, but still, for the first time in their new era, to dinner. She waited, with an uneasy expectation, for his entrance. Would perhaps, after all, something have connected her—something already brought to his knowledge—with that last night's horror from the shock of which her soul was still numbed? The morning papers had had only the briefest paragraph. How she had refrained from screaming it at him when, last night, he had returned—he had come before she expected him, impatient for her, uneasy, eager as a young lover—she did not know. But she had not. She had crushed the memory into the depths of her, had even managed to explain, lucidly and reasonably, that too-long-continued tension of solitude that had driven her to desperate flight when, as they had promised, they had "talked it out." Only, at the end, she had flung herself against him in a passion of hysterical, irresistible sobs.

He had been wonderful, had soothed her, had been tender, loving, had taken all the fault upon himself, had promised to delegate some of his work, had opened up magic prospects of exquisite honeymoons abroad together when the Vacations came—had sworn to her never again to imperil the possession he had so nearly lost. She seemed never to have known him before. He revealed himself as big and strong and inexpressibly comforting. She found herself loving him in a fiercely-ardent concentration of all her faculties which burnt to barren ashes all that was not he—loving him as Tregarthen had loved her. She had clung to him all the more tightly in the remembrance, as though as for ever to interpose herself between him and that knowledge. Underneath the passion of her love, the passion where husband and wife exchanged kisses as they two had never exchanged them before, she was frightened to the core. *If Stephen knew!* He would be without mercy in his revulsion. A prescience of his inexorable sternness haunted her, just outside the close charmed circle of his caresses, like a malevolent, mocking goblin that was not to be banished. Under its menace she shut her soul to an ever-tighter secrecy. *He should never, never know!* Alone here, before the fire, she recapitulated that poignant, heart-wrung ecstasy, reiterated the vow.

The opening of the door startled her from her reverie. She turned—it was Stephen, a smile on his face. She leaped up, in a moment was in his arms. Then, a pair of lovers, she led him to a seat by the fire.

"I will hurry dinner, dear," she said. "I did not expect you for half an hour yet."

"I couldn't keep away longer from you, sweetheart," he replied, kissing her as he had never before kissed when he came in. "You've been haunting me all day."

She rang the bell, gave an order to a servant, returned to him, brought him a cigarette to mitigate the time of waiting. They sat down—the first time at this hour of the evening for more than a year, as she reminded him—together over the fire.

For a minute or two their talk was personal to themselves.

"Ghastly business this of Tregarthen, isn't it?" he remarked, out of a pause. "Thank the Lord, they've got the fellow. Pretty clear case, too."

She looked up, startled. It was as though a mine had been sprung under her feet.

"You don't mean to say they've arrested someone?" she said, her head in a sudden whirl.

"They most certainly have," he replied, grimly. "And if I'm any judge, he'll swing for it."

"But—perhaps—perhaps he'll be able to prove his innocence," she ventured. She tried not to speak breathlessly, to control the thumping of her heart.

"Prove his innocence?" he echoed. "What on earth makes you think that? It's as clear as daylight. The fellow's a thorough bad hat. Tregarthen's own cousin, too. He'd helped him out of difficulties several times. Came there for money, I suppose, and Tregarthen refused it. Then he saw red and murdered him. There must have been a fight, for the panel of one of the doors was smashed. It was the noise and the pistol-shot that raised the alarm. A tenant on the upper floor heard it, told the lift-man, and went for a policeman. The scoundrel nearly shot one of them when they broke in. However, they caught him—and found his pocket stuffed with Tregarthen's money. The numbers of the notes have been identified as those the poor chap received in change for a cheque at his club last night. I think that settles him—if there were any doubt at all."

She listened with a white face.

"But what does he say—the man they've caught?" She must not betray too great an interest!

"He? He swears he didn't do it, of course. At the police-court examination to-day he told a cock-and-bull story of Tregarthen locking him in an inner room while he had an interview with some woman. He says he couldn't catch their conversation, but presently he heard a revolver-shot and tried to break out. He had just done so when the lift-man and the others rushed in. His yarn is that Tregarthen let the woman out and then committed suicide."

"And, of course, he can't prove it?"

"Not unless the woman comes forward and corroborates his story."

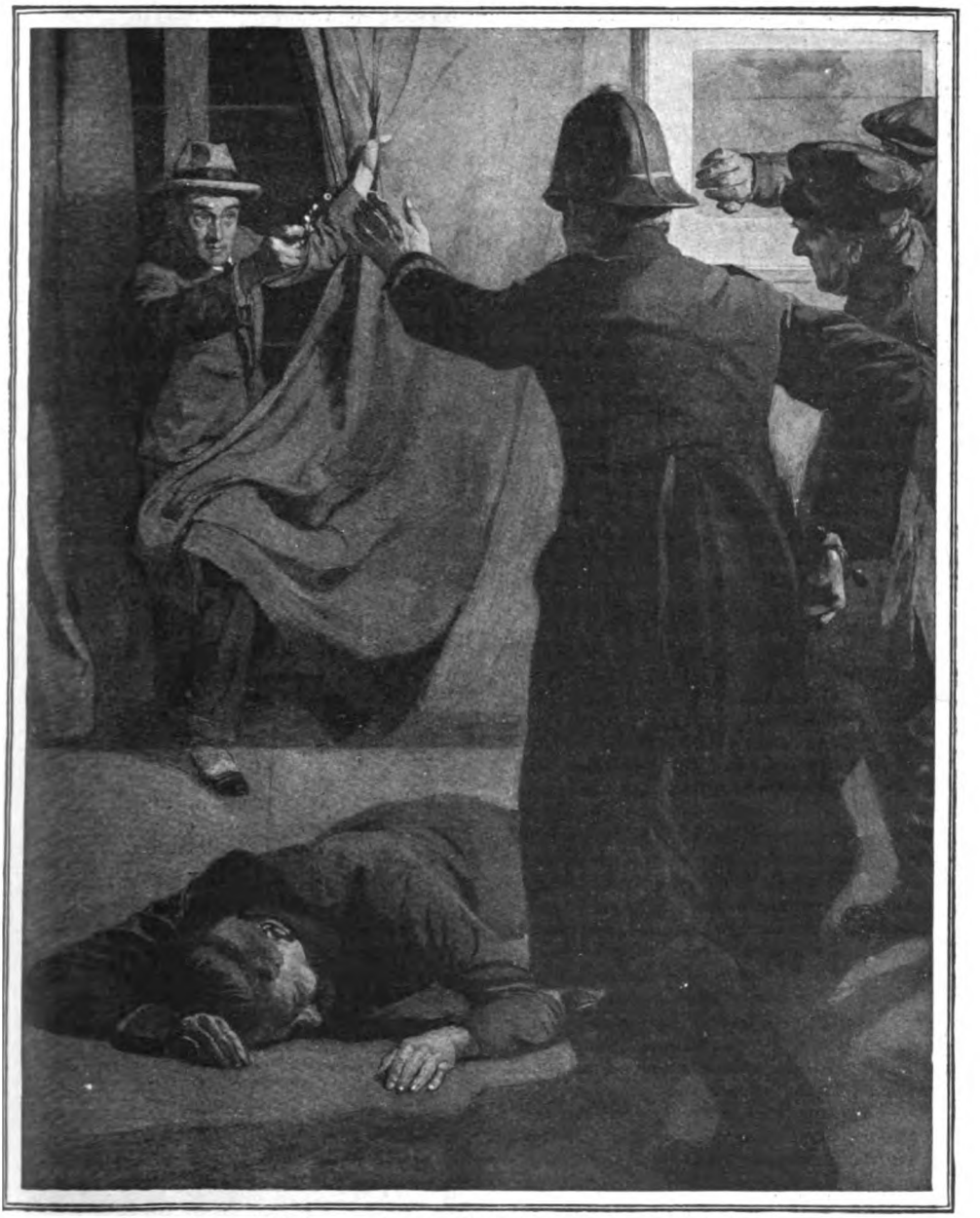
Stephen, mercifully, was looking into the fire. He did not see her countenance. Should she tell him—ruin utterly this new-found happiness—have that dear face turn on her in implacable anger and bitter contempt? All her last night's unreasoning terror rose up in her—struck her to dumbness at the first imagined word. She could not!—*she could not!* It was to temporize, to put a shield up before herself, that, dry-lipped, she found a phrase to utter.

"Who will prosecute, I wonder?"

"I shall, I expect," he replied, with a grim smile. "I've already been approached. They'll run him for this Sessions. And I shall have much pleasure in doing it. The brute! I had a very real regard for Tregarthen——" The dinner-gong boomed through the house. "Here we are!" he cried, cheerfully, jumping up from his seat. "Come along, my dear!"

She followed him, tortured. She could not let this go on! Should she tell him after all—presently—after dinner? She felt that she had let the moment—if ever there had been a possible moment—slip. It would be more difficult than ever now that she had not spoken immediately, insuperably difficult. She recoiled in terror from the mere prospect. Perhaps—perhaps after all, she tried to make herself believe, the man would in any case be able to prove his innocence. He would have a clever lawyer. The case would be thrashed out. He might, after all, have some circumstantial proof. She prayed silently for it, in an inward tense agony, as she followed her husband into the dining-room, where the old butler smiled with pleasure at his master's unwonted appearance.

THE trial had already been proceeding for two hours. From that privileged seat in the well of the court which her husband, surprised though he had been at her unusual request, had procured for her, Letitia Brand watched it with fevered eyes, her lips dry, her heart gripped in an awful suspense. She forgot the little crowd of fashionably-dressed women, of rarer men, breathless in their interest, among whom she sat. The back of the court, with its tight-jammed gallery of spectators whose occasional murmurs provoked a sharp menace from authority, faded from her consciousness. But it seemed to her that she would never lose the memory of the clean-shaven face, thin and austere under the heavy wig, of the red-robed judge high before her, of each of the individual faces of those twelve enigmatical, dull-looking jurymen packed in their pews



"Stand back!" he cried. "I didn't do it—I swear I didn't do it!"

at one side of the court, of that miserable white-faced policeman-guarded prisoner in the dock at the other. For two hours she had been focused upon them, with a tense and fear-fascinated interest, until they had been for ever burned into her brain.

Burnt into her brain, too, was her husband, unfamiliar in wig and gown, cool, cynical, incisive, sure of himself, as he had examined his witnesses, left them, with a smile of satisfaction, for cross-examination by the defending counsel. She knew that wigged and gowned figure personally, Ruthven Williamson, her husband's adversary in many a duel whose prize was the life or death of some wretched man or woman. The two men were duelling now, sharp and hostile, with an obvious sense of personal rivalry,

leaving their juniors, both of them, to the subordinate *rôles* of whispering at the solicitors' table, of handing up an occasional folded note to their battling chiefs. And she sickened at the inefficiency of her husband's opponent. He seemed to be conscious that he had a bad case, lost in advance. Conscious of it, too, was that miserable youth who stood, clutching with claw-like fingers at the edge of the dock, swallowing with a dry mouth as he listened to the damning evidence, looking with haggard eyes from the witness to the imperturbable, expressionless face of the judge, looking from the judge to those twelve dull-seeming men who held his fate in their hands. She prayed for him, as she had prayed night after night, praying for some eleventh-hour miracle that might establish his innocence without the annihilation of all that mattered to her. She prayed, tensely, desperately, with all her soul, less for him than for herself, prayed that this cup might pass away from her.

The testimony for the prosecution was concluded. The judge looked to the defending counsel.

"I will put Eric Norton in the box, my lord," he said.

THERE was a rustle in the court, a stir of expectation.

She watched the prisoner leave the dock, go shakily to the witness-box, listened to his story as Williamson drew it out of him with leading questions. She had no doubt of its truth. It tallied exactly with what she knew all too well: Tregarthen's leaving her for that brief moment when she had appeared at his door; the revolver-shot immediately after he had shut it on her when she left; the look of suicide in his eyes. She believed that he spoke the truth when he said that, finding the dead man after he had broken out of the bedroom, he had snatched up, in a moment of mad folly, the ninety pounds previously sworn-to by a club servant as Tregarthen's.

But it was plain that the jury did not believe. And when her husband, with that confident little smile upon his lips which made her feel sick and ill, rose to cross-examine, it was evident that the prisoner was a lost man.

Step by step, in that hushed court, Stephen Brand took him through his evidence. What had he gone to Tregarthen's rooms for? To ask him for money. He admitted it, then? Yes, he admitted it, but—— Never mind the "but," answer the question—he admitted it? Yes, he admitted it. She could have screamed. And his absurd story of suicide—did he not know that, as the murdered man's servant had sworn, Mr. Tregarthen was leaving for Paris by the eight o'clock train, was due to leave for the station at the moment of his death—his luggage already there—his servant waiting on the platform with the tickets? No, he did not know that. Was that the action of a man contemplating suicide? Witness could not say. Here defending counsel jumped up to say it had not been elucidated why deceased had told his servant to take *two* tickets—Harrison under cross-examination had been able to offer no explanation of that fact, except that his master had made no mention of being accompanied by anyone and might have ordered two tickets to secure a compartment for himself in the sleeping-car from Boulogne. The prosecuting counsel reminded his lordship of this supposition, was rewarded with an acquiescent nod.

The remorseless cross-examination continued. Prosecuting counsel wanted to know precisely why the witness thought he could get money from Mr. Tregarthen? Was there any reason why Mr. Tregarthen should give him money? The wretched youth stammered, faltered, blundered out that he had some letters. Letters? What letters? Letters written to a lady. (The agonized woman's heart gave a great jump, the blood came and went in her face—Maurice had never written to her, *he then had other*——?) Intimate letters? Yes. *Blackmail*, then? (triumphantly). Blackmail; the admission was extorted from him. And this lady of the letters, was she the lady he suggested was in the flat while—as he alleged—he was locked in the bedroom? No. That lady was in America. Could he offer any suggestion as to the identity of the lady he wished to make an intelligent jury believe had come to Mr. Tregarthen's rooms, to Mr. Tregarthen—one of the most brilliant of our younger statesmen, then at the very moment of a great success in his career—a few minutes before Mr. Tregarthen was to start for the Continent, had had five—less than five—minutes' conversation with him—and caused him to commit suicide, *leaving his cousin locked in a bedroom* (Brand laughed, and she saw the jurymen smile at the improbability)—could he give any indication at all about that lady? No. He could not. The prosecuting counsel reminded the judge that none of the witnesses, the lift-man, the policeman, or the other tenants, had seen anything of this mythical lady, although they were on the spot a moment or two after the tragedy. Did witness still persist in his absurd story? Witness did. Prosecuting counsel shrugged his shoulders, smiled, turned to the judge. From somewhere in

that hushed court a woman tittered in the tension of her nerves.

"I have finished, my lord." He sat down.

The prisoner returned, ghastly of face, to the dock. The judge looked towards the defending counsel.

"Have you any more witnesses, Mr. Williamson?"

Defending counsel bobbed up.

"No, my lord."

He sat down again, busied himself with rustling papers.

There was a moment's pause. In that moment's pause, Letitia Brand, looking from the judge to the jury, saw the prisoner's fate was sealed. The addresses to come from counsel were superfluous. That destructive cross-examination had been sufficient. *Unless—unless she spoke—now—at once!* The court seemed to whirl around her. She half-saw Williamson, bracing himself for the finish of a bad job, rise for his last words to the jury—and then, nerving herself with a desperate effort of the will, as though flinging herself into the black void of death, she jerked to her feet, spoke—loudly and clearly—in a voice that seemed far away from her ears.

"My lord, I wish to give evidence on behalf of the accused!"

There was a rustle, a murmur, a stir of astonishment in that crowded court, keyed up to the climax of the fateful business which for nearly three hours had occupied it. The judge dropped his pince-nez, picked them up, adjusted them, stared at her. She saw her husband staring at her too, looked anywhere but to meet his glance.

"You have evidence to give in this case?" The judge was speaking, his voice stern, eloquent of a mood that was not to be trifled with.

"Vital evidence," she replied, with a steadiness that astonished her.

"Mr. Williamson, put your witness in the box," said the judge.

She was led to it, was handed the book, took the oath, all the time searingly conscious of a face across the court—a face at which she dared not look. Mr. Williamson rose, purringly, caressingly, to examine.

"Your name, please?" he asked.

"Mrs. Letitia Brand."

There was a movement at the other side of the court. It was Stephen—on his feet.

"My lord," he said. "In the circumstances, I wish to retire from the case. The witness is my wife." She shuddered at the quiver in his voice.

The judge nodded acquiescence.

"I appreciate the circumstances, Mr. Brand."

She saw him hand his briefs to his junior, doff wig and gown, descend to the well of the court, sit staring at her.

Williamson was speaking, smugly triumphant. She answered his question.

Step by step, clearly, without equivocation, she told her story—all of it. She told of Tregarthen's threat of suicide, told of her projected flight with him, told of her visit to his rooms, of the letter of resignation he had written—she handed it to the judge—told of the pistol-shot the moment—she was sure it was but a moment, as the accused had said—the door was closed—of the resolution she had read in his eyes. She told the utter and absolute truth, as a person condemned might tell the truth, hopeless of any future, reckless of herself. She had finished. Mr. Williamson sat down, rubbing his hands. Down in the well of the court, Stephen was still staring at her. She did not, would not, look at him. All her strength was needed to remain standing in that box.

The judge turned to the junior prosecuting counsel.

"Do you wish to cross-examine, Mr. Hallam?" he asked.

Mr. Hallam bobbed up.

"My lord, after the last witness's evidence I think it is unnecessary to proceed further with the case."

She heard—and the court swam round her—vanished in a great blackness where waterfalls seemed to thunder in tumult upon her head.

SHE came to herself in a bare room. She was lying on her back. There was an unfamiliar man standing tall above her. There was another face—a face at which she closed her eyes—close above hers. She heard his voice.

"Letty! Letty!" The voice was agonized. "Letty darling! Look at me! You're all I want in the world! My own woman! You did what I could never have done. Letty! Letty! Look at me!"

She opened her eyes, feeling that this was dream, delirium. She saw his face, yearning, contorted, above her. It was real.

His reckless, low-toned laugh was strange to her. "I can do as much for you as Tregarthen did—I love you more than he knew how to love. Letty, we'll go right away together—have those honeymoons I've never had time to have! Letty!"

They were left alone in that bare room.

THE GIRL WHO SAID "PLEASE"

by

J·J·BELL

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

SO fine was the May morning that Colin Berwick, emerging from Euston Hotel, gave the driver of the taxi summoned by the porter a florin, and decided to walk to his place of appointment in Victoria. You may say that it must indeed have been a fine morning thus to affect a young man at Euston, and that the appointment could hardly have been one of vast importance. But London has its May mornings that beautify far drabber places than Euston, and there are still young men in the world susceptible to spring's influences, even at the most material and critical moments in their careers.

And while it was still morning, as London counts it, Colin Berwick found himself walking through St. James's Park, in the right direction. Colin would have done badly in an examination on Metropolitan Geography, but he had rather a charming manner in requesting direction, and constables and civilians were alike at pains to point out and explain the most direct route. For the rest, he was a tall young man of no great breadth, inclined to fairness, debonair, eager of countenance—a young man who had been often in love, but never seriously. Love, to be sure, was the last idea in his mind—he was thinking of a lucrative post—as he strode through St. James's Park on this fine May morning.

He was, to be precise, wondering how best he might express himself to the powerful personage who had selected him, with four others, out of three hundred applicants, for interview in connection with an appointment carrying twelve hundred pounds a year and great possibilities. Wherefore he did not notice the girl coming from the side path till she was right in front of him, actually blocking his progress.

"Please!" said the girl, distinctly yet shyly.

Colin had a glimpse of dark hair under a hat with just a touch of scarlet, velvety brown eyes, a red mouth, grave, appealing, though not without humour.

"Please—take it."

The girl was gone, almost running, and he was staring down at an oblong of paper in his hand.

He unfolded it—a half-sheet of cheap note-paper — and read the hurriedly pencilled words:—

"Be warned! Avoid 40, *Princes Street, W., this afternoon. Danger.—A Well-wisher."*

Almost instantly it struck him that he had been given a message intended for another person; the girl, merely a messenger, as he assumed, had blundered. And the girl had disappeared. He wasted several minutes in searching for her; several more in watching the passers-by for one who looked like a person requiring a warning. Then, inwardly, he laughed at himself—at his fatuity. The thing itself, he reflected, might be serious enough. Was it not a matter for the police? For Scotland Yard? Where on earth was Scotland Yard? He looked for a constable, a disengaged taxi.

He glanced at his watch—and was reminded of his engagement. And when a taxi did come along, he took it, giving the address of the personage in Victoria.

Now there is a temptation to describe in detail how Colin met and impressed the personage, how—with honest regrets for the other four—he obtained the important post, and how the personage, becoming human and genial, entertained Colin to lunch. But these, after all, were not the really great moments of Colin's life. The really great moments were to follow; and the first of them, though he did not realize its significance then, was when, having seen the personage driven off from a West-end hotel restaurant, he put his fingers in his watch-pocket and felt the folded paper bearing the words:—

"Be warned! Avoid 40, *Princes Street, W., this afternoon. Danger.—A Well-wisher."*

His time was now his own, and he returned

"Please!" said the girl, distinctly yet shyly. "Please—take it."

to the hotel lounge, ordered coffee, and considered the mysterious document. Hurriedly written, as has been said, it now struck him as the work of a person in a state of panic, and he had visions of anarchists, infernal machines, and an unsuspecting victim going to his doom. Ought not he, without delay, to carry the matter to Scotland Yard?

Reflection, however, cooled his imagination, bringing out less sinister possibilities. A secret love affair, for instance; maybe an illicit one. But in neither case was it any of his or Scotland Yard's business. The picture of a poor but worthy young man, faced unexpectedly by an angry, opulent father, stirred Colin's sympathy; but that of a philanderer caught by an outraged husband made the miscarriage of the warning seem quite providential.

Yet Colin, having finished his coffee, was still curious. Who was the girl who had misdelivered the message? Without, perhaps, his realizing it, this was the most urgent question of all; for though memory retained but the vaguest impression of velvety brown eyes and dark hair under a hat with a gleam of scarlet, some brain-cell had recorded, as it were, that softly and prettily spoken "please" of hers in so perfect a fashion that it became an echo through his thoughts.

At the hotel bureau he learned that Princes Street, W., ran from the north side of Oxford Street; and about four o'clock, excusing the folly to himself on the score of having nothing better to do, he made his way thither. And no sooner had he turned into the street of his quest than he experienced a strong and far from pleasant thrill.

A little way ahead, Princes Street was almost blocked with people, mostly men, and police were striving to regulate the traffic. The crowd was gazing at a recently-painted section of building, from which projected a sign bearing in huge golden figures the number "40."

The thrill gave place to a sinking feeling. Something serious, sensational, must have happened to attract that staring mob. All sorts of outrages, including murder, occurred to Colin, with the horrid thought that, whatever crime had been committed, he might have prevented it by acting on his first impulse of handing the note to the authorities.

So perturbed was Colin that he was into the crowd before he perceived that the bulk of it was in a condition of amusement, and that while arrivals plunged in, others made their escape, some laughing, some shrugging, a few swearing crossly. Soon he was in the thick of it, pushed onward by eager newcomers, and ere long a slight advantage in height enabled him to discern something of the attraction—two large windows stocked with waxen-faced figures wearing "the latest" in men's clothing.

Then it dawned! Messrs. Moses Einstein and Son had hit on a brilliant scheme for drawing public attention to their newly-opened West-end tailoring establishment! Just for a moment Colin was annoyed; then his sense of humour came to the rescue, and he laughed and began to work his way out of the press, taking off his hat, metaphorically, to Messrs. Moses Einstein and Son.

Suddenly he wondered whether the girl with her pretty "please" was still distributing notes of warning, and, with the absurdity of young manhood, resented the idea of her saying "please" to other men

A TAXI rushed him across to St. James's Park, and there he spent half an hour in searching for her. And because the search proved vain, he became determined to find her again, somehow. Another taxi rushed him back to Princes Street. The crowd was denser than ever, but at last he got through it and entered the premises of Messrs. Moses Einstein and Son, who appeared to be doing fair business. He noted that the quality seemed good, while the prices were moderate, and then he was greeted by an elegantly-upholstered gentleman with charming manners and most winning smile.

Colin was in no need of new clothing, but he was not sufficiently barefaced to seek information without paying for it. So he permitted the elegantly-upholstered gentleman to show him "the choicest things in light tweeds" and took occasion to congratulate him on the success of the novel advertising "stunt."

"The great thing is to get known," was the reply. "We shall keep our customers once we get them. This morning we sent out a hundred nice-looking young ladies, and they seem to have done their work well."

"Does your firm employ so many?" Colin inquired.

"Oh, the young ladies are engaged only for this particular service. We shall send them out again to-morrow morning; then we shall wait and see."

"Are they distributing all the morning?"

"They have from nine till one to get rid of their notes—each starts with a hundred—but as a rule they are finished by noon. Of course, as you will understand, sir, they are expected to use discrimination in selecting their——"

"Fortunate victims," suggested Colin, whereat the elegantly-upholstered gentleman laughed heartily.

In the end, Colin ordered, and was

measured for, a suit, but departed without certitude as to whether the morrow would find the same young ladies on the same "beats" as before. He called himself an ass, decided to drop the foolishness, ate a solitary dinner, and spent the evening at a theatre. He slept well, but woke early, fancying he heard the sound of a soft voice saying "please."

BEFORE nine o'clock he was in St. James's Park. At the end of an hour he sighted her in the act of confiding a note to a short, stout, middle-aged, rather fierce-looking gentleman. Somehow the sight annoyed him. Not waiting to witness the recipient's inevitable astonishment, he hurried after the trim fleeing figure. Halting at last in a side path, the girl took a fresh note from her handbag.

"Pardon me," said Colin, anything but sure of himself, "won't you give me one, too?"

She regarded him a little haughtily. "Didn't you get one yesterday?" she said.

"You have a good memory," he remarked, gratified in spite of her chilly tone.

"That is part of my business," she returned, still more coldly, and made to go.

"One moment, please. I just wanted to tell you that I went to 40, Princes Street."

"Really! But that is not my business. Good morning."

"Just an instant. You should have seen the crowd yesterday."

"I saw it. Nothing better to do," she said, sadly, then froze again. "Good morning."

"I—I bought a suit," stammered Colin, and perhaps because he stammered she allowed her manner to become less frigid.

"I'm afraid that, too, is none of my business," she said. "Still, I wish you a good fit," she added, with the ghost of a smile. "And now I've got a big bunch of notes to hand out before one o'clock, so——"

"Let me help you. Give me half of the bundle and I'll——"

She stopped him with a gesture. "I think you mean to be kind," she said, "but I must do what I'm paid for doing. Once more, good morn——"

"A moment more," he pleaded. "Do you like doing it?"

She made a little grimace. "Anything is better than nothing to do, and this won't last long enough for me to detest it. For all I know, to-day may finish it." A small sigh escaped her. Her eyes, which had met his frankly, turned abruptly away, but not before he had detected the sudden dread in them.

Colin had known many pretty girls, yet this one had a charm of her own, and it seemed she was in distress.

Gently he said: "Forgive the question—I've come through the mill myself—but do you really mean that you may be out of a berth to-morrow?"

She nodded shortly. "Until yesterday I had been out of one for three months," she said, "so the novelty has worn rather thin."

"Is your home in London?"

"No; more than a hundred miles away." She drew herself up. "Our talk is becoming rather intimate, don't you think? I must——"

"We are both strangers in a strange place——"

"I'm hardly that. I've been in London for two years and know it pretty well. When times were good, the firm I was with used to send me out as guide with American clients and their wives or daughters. But there I go again! Really——"

"Do you like London?" asked Colin, just to carry on the talk.

"I did—before the slump that made me one of the unemployed. However," she went on quickly, as though fearing an expression of sympathy, "the home folks want me back, and there's always a place for me in my uncle's office there."

"Why haven't you gone back?"

"Haven't had the moral courage, I suppose, to confess myself beaten, after having always declared to my people that I would make good. But"—with a rueful smile—"now that the girl I lived with has given up and gone home, I expect I shall soon do the same. I don't know why I should be telling a stranger such things. Funny world, isn't it? And I'm neglecting my one and only duty. Well, good-bye, and I—I hope you won't be disappointed with the suit." Her smile became brave as she turned to go.

"Tell me one thing," said Colin. "What have you got to do to-day after you have got rid of the notes?"

"Nothing—except call at 40, Princes Street for my rich reward! Now let me go, *please*."

The word he had wanted to hear her speak! His colour deepened.

"Let me tell you something—ask a favour," he said; "and don't be offended, for it's respectfully meant. I know nothing about London, and very shortly I shall be coming to live in it. In the meantime I have a few idle days and want to use them in learning my way about. As—as a business proposition, would you consider it worth your while to—to act as guide, as you did for the American clients, and show me something of London?" He was now

obviously embarrassed. "I—I suggest a guinea a day, and, of course, all expenses."

The girl said nothing. She was rather pale.

"I'd be awfully glad of your help—your company," he went on. "I'm really not a bad sort, though not at all amusing. My name is Colin Berwick and——"

"Please!" She was frowning downwards, tapping the ground with her foot. "It would be charity."

"On your side."

She sighed and faced him. "Yes, I'm sure you mean it kindly, Mr.——"

"Berwick."

"——Mr. Berwick, and I'm grateful." Her smile dawned again. "But though no one has ever called me prim, I can't help feeling that this kind idea of yours is just a little—well, just a little beyond me."

"But at least you might consider it," he said. "Think it over while you are finishing your present duty. Allow me to see you again, here, say, at twelve-thirty. If by then you have decided against the idea, I sha'n't attempt to argue; indeed, I promise to go without a word. Till then, good-bye."

And with that he left her. Perhaps his mind was not quite calm; possibly his pulses were a little thrilled. He had not fallen in love with the girl—wittingly, at any rate; but he saw himself on the verge of an adventure the end of which was invisible. And, of course, he was still exalted by the great good fortune that had befallen him less than twenty-four hours ago, and his own passage through the mill, to use his own phrase, had but refined his natural fellow-feeling. We may do Colin the credit of believing that in similar circumstances a plain-featured girl, without any fascinating "please," would just then have stirred his sympathies and desire to help. Not that he was unsusceptible to velvety brown eyes, a straight nose, a pretty mouth emitting pretty speech, and a trim figure with a dainty bearing. It is admitted that he found the next three hours pass slowly, and that he wondered about the girl, her home and people, though he declared to himself that, if she agreed to his plan, he would ask her nothing concerning herself or her affairs.

SO it was by no means without anxiety that he kept his tryst, nor without apprehension that he waited in vain for fifteen minutes. And when she appeared, her look told him nothing.

"I'm sorry to be late," she said, "and I'm afraid I've given most of the notes to unlikely people."

"Never mind," said Colin. "What is it to be?"

"Mr. Berwick, I'll tell the truth," she replied. "I hate being beaten, though perhaps it would be finer of me to admit defeat. But there's just a chance of a secretarial post for me, if I can hold on for another week or two, and so"—she halted for a moment—"and so I accept your very kind offer. My name is Patience Western and——"

"That is enough for me," he interrupted, fearing she was going to give way. "May we shake hands on it?"

She gave him her hand, and there was rather an awkward pause.

"Would you like first to go to Princes Street and get that finished?" asked Colin.

"Yes, please—and when and where would you like me to meet you afterwards?"

"I'll go with you to Princes Street, and then it will be time for lunch, and you can begin to tell me things about London."

"Oh! I hadn't thought of lunching with you, Mr. Berwick."

"I hope you won't mind doing so. It's my one way of being entertaining."

A smile flickered and went out. "Besides"—with a critical glance at her skirt—"I had thought of running home from Princes Street. I'm staying at a boarding-house in——"

"You can have an hour off after lunch," said Colin, blind to the little vanity and thinking she must have breakfasted pretty early. "Won't that do?"

"Very well," she agreed, though a trifle unwillingly. "But, please, there is one condition I must ask you to accept. You are never to regard me as a—a guest. I mean you are never to spend more because I'm a girl. It is business, you know."

"I'm no millionaire," he returned, both touched and amused. "You need not be afraid of my attempting anything in the joy line. In fact, you must guide me past the too expensive places."

"Well, that makes it easier," she said, then heaved a sigh of relief. "Oh, I'm glad I'm finished with Einstein's!"

After which, as was natural in two young and well-disposed people, they proceeded to the making of each other's better acquaintance. That is to say, they got to know each other without learning anything of each other's affairs. It seemed to be tacitly understood that while their business relationship admitted of friendliness, anything in the way of intimate friendship was forbidden. The girl's talk was always impersonal, and if, once in a while, Colin, however lightly, touched the personal note, he received no encouragement to continue in that strain. On the whole, he behaved with admirable circumspection, but as the days passed a close observer might have noted a certain repression in his manner.

As a rule, he left all arrangements to Patience, who, being a really conscientious young person, lost a good deal of sleep in memorizing bits of guide-books in preparation for the next day's excursion. Colin, by the way, extended the number of his days of idleness from four to seven. One may imagine that they enjoyed those outings, in London itself and on the river; one may even believe that they enjoyed the comradeship as much as the sights and scenery. And one could scarce have doubted that something very like melancholy was present on the evening of their last repast together, which, for once, was not taken in one of the least expensive restaurants.

It was inevitable that Colin should go North by a morning train, and though he would return at the end of the month to stay, nothing as yet had been said as to the possibility of future meetings. Which may serve to show that Colin had respected the business relationship which still existed.

But now there was a personal question which he could not keep back. They were at the coffee stage when he put it.

"Miss Western, don't put it down to mere curiosity; but on the first day of our acquaintance you mentioned the possibility of a secretarial post. May I ask about that?"

"I believe I have a good chance," she replied, "but I sha'n't know for certain until the end of next week. And there is no reason," she added, frankly, "why you should not ask that question, seeing that, thanks to you, I can hold on till then."

"I wish——" he began, eagerly, and checked himself. He had learned ere this enough about her character to be assured that she would deeply resent any suggestion of friendly help beyond that which was represented by her fee as guide.

What a miserably inadequate fee it seemed—seven guineas! He had it in his pocket now—in the form of a Post Office money order concealed in a small envelope. The money order was, of course, a childish device, but he had revolted at the idea of handing money—cash—notes and silver—filthy lucre, indeed—to her. And now he was wondering how on earth he was going to present her with the polite little envelope! Seven guineas—seven pounds seven shillings—what mockery!—for the happiest week he had ever lived! So much for business 'twixt man and girl!

Yet she had just told him that the wretched pittance would enable her to "hold on." Well, thank God for that! Smoking a cigarette, he watched her. She seemed to be interested in the life of the gay room. It had been a concession on her part, this dinner in a big West-end restaurant. Hitherto he had not presumed to offer her so much as a box of chocolates, or a taxi home on a wet night. Thus far, though they had always dined together—he had argued that that was part of the contract—she had insisted on a modest meal in a quiet place, and had left him immediately it was over. It was necessary that he should know her address, but he had never approached it in her company.

Watching her now, he was ready to offer her all the little he had and all he hoped ever to have. But there she sat, calm as she was sweet to see, proud as adorable—and his heart failed him. Seven guineas—that was all she would accept from him; and he believed she would accept it even as he proffered it—with distaste. The really great venture—to ask her to marry him—was beyond him—hopeless. With bitter humour—his saving, perhaps, just then—he reflected that he was wearing a suit of Messrs. Einstein's, and that it fitted him well And Patience—of all sweet names!—Patience had beaten him there only because she had desired to beat London!

Suddenly her eyes came back to his.

"Mr. Berwick, it's time I was going."

He knew her better than to beg for delay. Yet, though the great venture was beyond him, he was constrained to make a tiny one. It was their last meeting—so, at least, he greatly feared.

"Is there any good reason, Miss Western," he said, "why we should not go to a theatre?"

"None," she answered, and his heart leapt, only to relapse, "so long as I pay for my seat. Don't think me horrid, but we made a bargain, and"—she made a little gesture at the flowers on the table—"I've already taken more than was my due."

"But—our last evening—surely the bargain, strictly speaking, has expired?"

"Strictly speaking, it expires at nine-thirty, or thereabouts, to-morrow morning. Truly, Mr. Berwick, I'd rather not exceed our arrangement further than I've done. Also, it's a bit late for the theatre. If you don't mind——"

Colin glanced at his watch. "Yes, it's eight-twenty, and—strictly speaking—you ought to have been free at eight." He said it bravely, and did not notice her little glance of approval. "I must try to keep to the bargain." He signalled to the waiter, settled the bill, and got up.

She was drawing on her gloves, taken from her handbag, which she had laid on the table. Colin, with an awkward attempt to cover the action, and with his face on fire, brought forth the polite little envelope and put it into the bag. She could not help seeing the deed; her

colour bloomed and faded, leaving her pale.

At the door of the restaurant he said: "For this once you will let me drive you home."

"Please!" she whispered, protestingly.

"You will let me walk with you?"

"I get a bus just here."

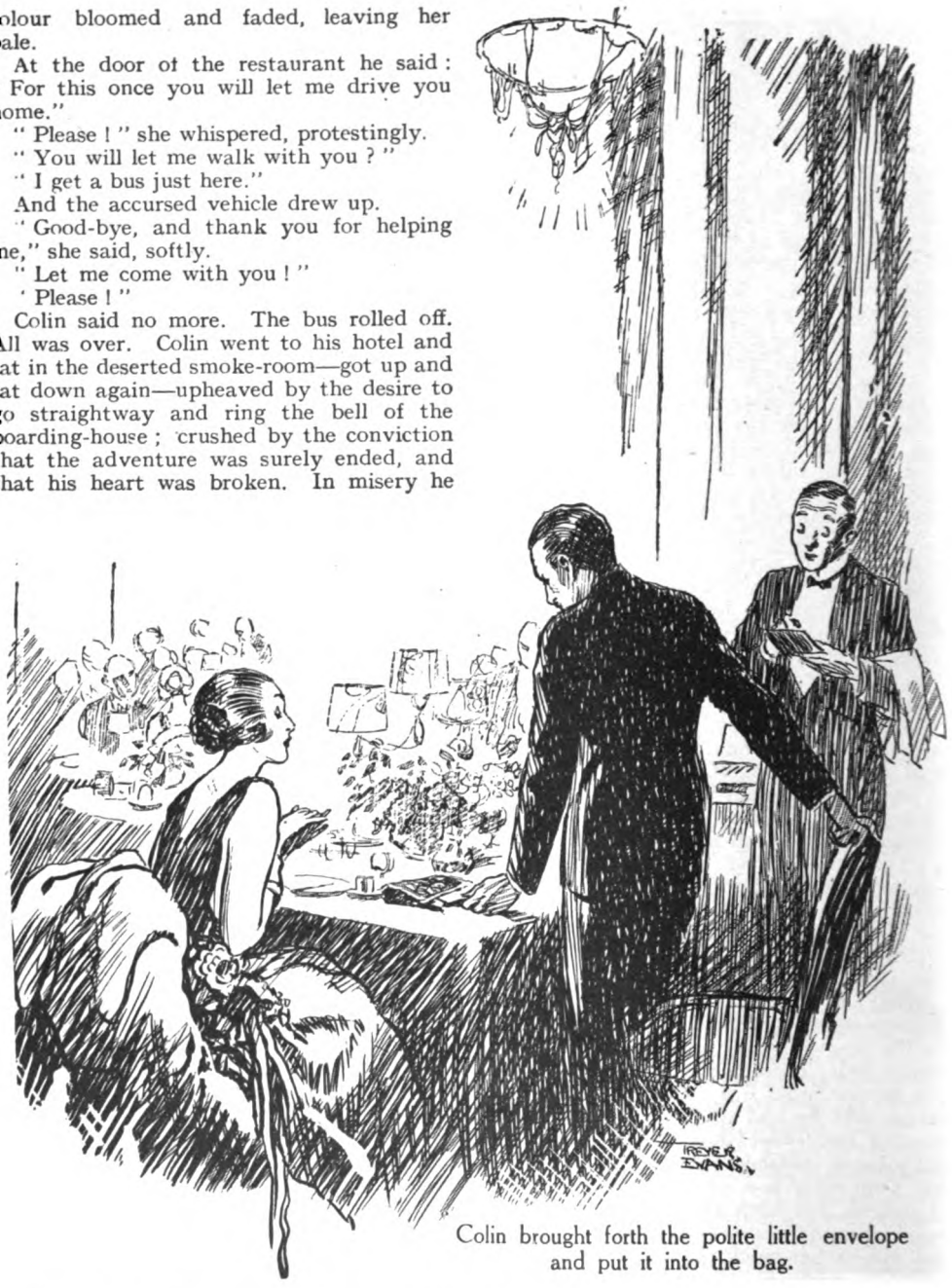
And the accursed vehicle drew up.

"Good-bye, and thank you for helping me," she said, softly.

"Let me come with you!"

"Please!"

Colin said no more. The bus rolled off. All was over. Colin went to his hotel and sat in the deserted smoke-room—got up and sat down again—upheaved by the desire to go straightway and ring the bell of the boarding-house; crushed by the conviction that the adventure was surely ended, and that his heart was broken. In misery he



Colin brought forth the polite little envelope and put it into the bag.

reviewed the past week, only to conclude, first, that Patience had never once been ungracious, and, second, that Patience had never once given him the flimsiest bit of encouragement.

On the first appearance of other hotel guests he went up to his room, packed his suit-case with difficulty, thanks to the Einstein purchase—and went to bed. It seemed that he never slept, but shortly after nine a boots, whose marvellous memory had recorded something about the ten a.m. train from King's Cross, came personally to rouse No. 123, and presented him with a letter marked "Urgent." Half-awake, Colin opened it.

"*Dear Mr. Berwick,—*

"*I have decided to go home in the morning, so do not require the enclosed. Good-bye, and thank you for everything.*

"*Yours sincerely,*

"PATIENCE WESTERN."

And out fell the money order for seven guineas.

Wideawake, Colin dressed. Why was she going home? Had she got ill news about the secretarial post? Had London beaten her, after all? The thought tore his heart. Patience beaten! God, he could not bear that! He must see her. Surely she could not have left London—damnable place—already. Patience, with her lovely brown eyes and her dear honesty and her delicious "please." Something must be done! Himself he would find her a secretarial post; he would go to the personage to whom he owed his own splendid appointment; he would impress upon the personage—— No, there was no time to shave—and, confound it, he had packed all his clean collars!

Breakfast forgotten, the ten a.m. train consigned to the devil—he was in a taxi which crawled, as it seemed, towards the boarding-house. At last he was there and got out, bidding the man wait.

"Miss Western," said the servant, "left ten minutes ago."

"Which station?"

"Paddington."

"Paddington!" shouted Colin, bounding down the steps.

Then he bounded up again. Money passed.

"Tell me—did Miss Western receive any letters, last night or this morning?"

"Thank you, sir. No, sir. I believe it's platform three, sir."

"Paddington!" cried Colin.

Colin, having none to trust save the servant, bolted for platform three, plucked a platform ticket from the machine, and passed the barrier as the starting signal was given. The great train moved.

Money passed. A door opened in the rear of the train; an official propelled Colin on board. Colin got his breath and silently blessed the inventor of the corridor train. He knew not whither the train was bound, but what did that matter if only Patience were on board?

He began his search. The train, as it appeared to Colin, was about five miles long. But in the fore part he found her.

She was in a full compartment, her eyes half-closed. He stood outside gazing till, as one may imagine, he made her aware of his presence. She looked up, and the colour flushed, then drained from her face.

Then, as though he had called her—as, indeed, his whole being had called her—she rose and stumbled into the corridor.

"Why?" whispered Colin, her hands caught in his. "Oh, Patience, why?"

"Please!" murmured Patience, possibly because she had, just then, no other word available.

And there is a person even more to be blessed than the inventor of the corridor train. No, not the inventor of the tunnel; for the tunnel means but a moment in a long journey. The great and worthy person is the kind conductor who knows of a vacant first-class compartment on the Plymouth express.

ACROSTICS.

OUR twenty-sixth series of acrostics begins with No. 129, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 129.

If flowers may their seasons represent,
Winter and spring should here be evident.

1. Between the cup and lip this may occur.
2. The month when fogs oppress the Londoner.
3. Rising, the east. Write only half the word.
4. It turns at last, caught by the early bird.
5. Golf club, or player, offers you a ride.
6. In Shakespeare's play, he and his lady died.
7. Horrible monster, eight-armed cuttlefish.
8. September brings the bird—a welcome dish.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 129 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on April 10th. They must be written on half-sheets of notepaper, or on cards; at the foot of the solution must appear the solver's pseudonym, and nothing else. Flimsy paper should not be used.*

One alternative answer may be sent to each light.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 128.

1. C	heri	B
2. H	ond	U
3. R	a	T
4. Y	orkis	T
5. S	alsett	E
6. A	v	R
7. L	umgluf	F
8. I	nopo	L
9. S	hrewsbur	Y

NOTES.—Light 1. Saigon, Sargon; Sen, anna, Sennacherib. 2. Honduras: Ras, a head. The name is derived from the Spanish *honduras*, depths. 3. The house that Jack built. 4. Defeated at Wakefield Green, victorious at Mortimer's Cross, finally defeated at Bosworth Field. 5. Bomb? Ay. Salsette, near Bombay. 6. French, *Avril* lacking *il*. 7. Gulliver's Travels, A Voyage to Lilliput. Seventy glumgluffs make seventy-two inches, twelve lines make one inch. 8. Constantinop litan. Benjamin Constant, the painter: it, an. 9. Shrewsbury: Shrewsbury School. Two spelling mistakes, corrected into "inter" (bury) and "Katharina."

The Human Side of Telegraphy and Telephony

BY JOHN LEE, C.B.E.

THERE have been all sorts of prophecies as to the influence on human nature of telegraphy and telephony. So great a philosopher as Herbert Spencer suggested that the influence would be revolutionary and that human nature would be entirely changed. It is worth while to look at certain aspects of the human side of telegraphy and telephony not so much to answer the question whether or not these prophecies have been fulfilled, but to examine the underlying human motives and human attitudes to these and similar means of transmitting ideas over distances. Scientists tell us that the speech of human beings has come about through man's passion for gregariousness. He wished to be nearer to his kind, to exchange ideas, to correct and amplify judgment by means of corroboration or of contribution or of contradiction, to keep memories alive and to correlate expectations. In the lower animals it was a sex call, broadened in some cases, as in the snake and the crocodile, to a signal of warning of impending danger In this transmission of ideas it may be that man has lost faculties as a balance for what he has gained. Savage tribes can hear signals by putting their ears to the ground. News, such as the tidings of the fall of Port Arthur, has passed over continents in a few days. Dr. Rivers has shown us how the Melanesians could pass words of command and of suggestion from a leader to a company without the articulation of a single word, and that a vote could be taken without any visible machinery for recording or even for arriving at a decision. They had some sort of intuitive sense of agreement or of disagreement.

All sorts of achievements were expected of telegraphy in the earlier days. In 1868 a lady brought in a pair of boots in Leicester to be transmitted to her son in Scotland. There are well-authenticated cases of members of the public asking for messages in sealed envelopes to be transmitted secretly—"I don't want anyone to read what I have said." These stories are usually told to illustrate ignorance at the time, but they prove something else. They prove that expectations were too high. In the earlier days the motives were very mixed. The young man who handed in a Bible at an office in Texas in order to keep the line busy and to prevent the transmission of another telegram contributed a pleasing incident to the romance of telegraphy. The telegram which was to forbid his marriage could not get through, and if this catches the eye of his descendants I wish them to know that the telegraphist only reached the Book of Leviticus. Another romance surrounded a young gentleman who wished to hand in a telegram at a West-end office in the days when there was a separate company operating in London. He asked to be allowed to send a super-telegram, as we should call it. "I want to tell them I am engaged," he confided in the lady at the counter, "and it only happens once in a lifetime." For such a purpose a uniform tariff seemed to be altogether unsuitable. Even to-day, I am credibly informed, there are persons who send telegrams in order to evade the appalling responsibility of choosing between "Yours faithfully" and "Yours sincerely." Those who wish to follow the subtlety of romance in a telegram at a West-end office are commended to Mr. Henry James's novel, "In the Cage."

The use of telegrams in connection with travel is not so simple as it looks. We imagine that it means an announcement to relieve anxiety as to the journey. But in the 'seventies the art of travelling was expanding. It was beginning to attract social classes who had not travelled previously. The telegram was a concomitant of the venture. It was a legitimate climax

So at those places where the lower middle-classes came in thousands the "Arrived safe" telegram was a feature. For reasons which are not psychologically difficult to explain, the association of the telegram with death was a feature of the early days. The orange envelope brought a shudder, as it does on the stage to this day. The need for a telegram in such cases was based upon the probable necessity for a journey, and perhaps a long journey, and a serious writer in 1869 pointed out that telegrams had something to do with the increased elaborateness of funerals, for the coming of friends from a distance brought a reaction on the preparations.

Yet there are historic cases of even stranger results. It is said that the town of Jacksonville, Illinois, had its finances in so appalling a condition that the telegraph company refused to credit the city treasurer for a sixty-cent telegram, and that out of this incident arose the public demand for such a reformation that to-day it is one of the best governed of cities. What happened to a telegram at Ems which was slightly altered by a celebrated personage is known to all readers of history. Telegraphy saved Delhi at a critical moment nearly half a century ago. In political history in this country there have been several famous telegrams, and at least one General Election has been assigned to a misunderstanding between brevity and bluntness. Murderers have been caught by its means, as in the case of the famous Paddington-Slough line in 1844, and in the case of Dr. Crippen, where wireless telegraphy was the medium.

Then there are tragedies in abundance. Fiction has made the most of them, but it falls far behind fact. Just as telegraphs have marked the outbreak of war by their use, so they have marked it by their disuse. I have read a moving account of the silencing of the wires between England and Germany in 1914, how one by one the wires were hushed, and how at midnight the letters "G.N." for "Good night" were slowly spelled and silently received, and then—the tragedy began. There was, too, the sorrowful transmission of the casualty telegrams and the days when the orange envelope was dreaded in castle and in by-street. There were heroisms in plenty, in France and in Gallipoli and in lonely seas where men kept watch and ward day by day and month by month. I like to think of these lonely islands, cable stations, and wireless stations. I like to visualize one in particular in the South Pacific, only eighteen miles in circumference. The men there are isolated, true enough, but it is a complex isolation. They are more in touch with the events of the day than the residents of a London suburb. They see all the news, and so they live their lives, psychologically very mixed, in touch with civilization at one moment and bartering with the uncivilized at another.

There they go, these lines. They touch the lonely North—Alaska, and Hudson Bay, and Reykjavik, and Murman. They cross the Andes and the Himalayas. They are three miles below the surface of the sea. They are invisible and intangible in the upper ether. They waken up China, where Sir Robert Hart had to tackle an alphabet which stubbornly objected to come within the twenty-six combinations hitherto known to Westerns. They cross the cold plains of Siberia and the rich expanse of Canada. They bind all races of men together. And yet the old question arises. Were the philosophers wrong?

I know a case in my own experience where a lady brought back a telegram which she had received and said it was not her son's handwriting, and that she did not believe he had sent it. Indeed, scientists have spent weary hours inventing a machine which would transmit the message just as it was written. Then the typewriter came,

Girls with soft voices over the telephone were proved by statistics to be the marriageable girls.

and all you get in an ordinary letter is a signature you cannot read (in many instances) at the foot of a printed communication. Telegraphy followed the typewriter, and to-day we have various ingenious machines which print a number of telegrams simultaneously or singly at an incredible speed. Has it all had any influence upon human nature? A psychological friend tells me that side by side with the advance in the communication of ideas over distances there has been an advance in similarity in mankind. We are more alike. We want to be even more alike. We should have felt the influence of telegraphy (so he says) far more had we preserved more of what he calls individual *differentia*. The communication of ideas, he urges, is dependent upon individuality. Who writes letters to-day as our grandfathers wrote them?

But, says the scientist, the change will come. I look up my newspaper cuttings on the early history of the telephone. "This invention, not excepting printing, is the most momentous of all time," says one of the most authoritative newspapers in London in 1880. "It will revolutionize human nature." Now the odd thing is that the human mind imposes its own limits on the telephone. The use of the word "Hello" is an instance. It is the old cry after the hounds. Milton wrote of it: "Some far-off halloo breaks the silent air." It is the shout across the valley. (I refuse to consider the silly phrase, "Hello girl.") Now this word sticks to telephony, like the dully stupid "Are you there?" And the reason is that the human mind will not overcome its basic conception of distance. You are speaking most intimately to your friend. You are whispering in his ear. You have entered into his inner chamber. Why shout and why hullo? But there is even more than this in it. I read a pamphlet in which one of my New York brethren said that the girls with soft voices over the telephone were proved by statistics to be the marriageable girls. I am sure that it is true, but it is not merely because their voices are soft and sweet but because they have sympathetic temperaments. It is astonishing how the telephone reveals temperament. It brings out the skeleton from your mental cupboard. It brooks no masking or hiding of your little foibles. Even more than that, there are curious antipathies which it reveals. I found in India that men of one faith never got on well by telephone with men of another faith.

Broadcasting will lead to a new type of stage-fright—

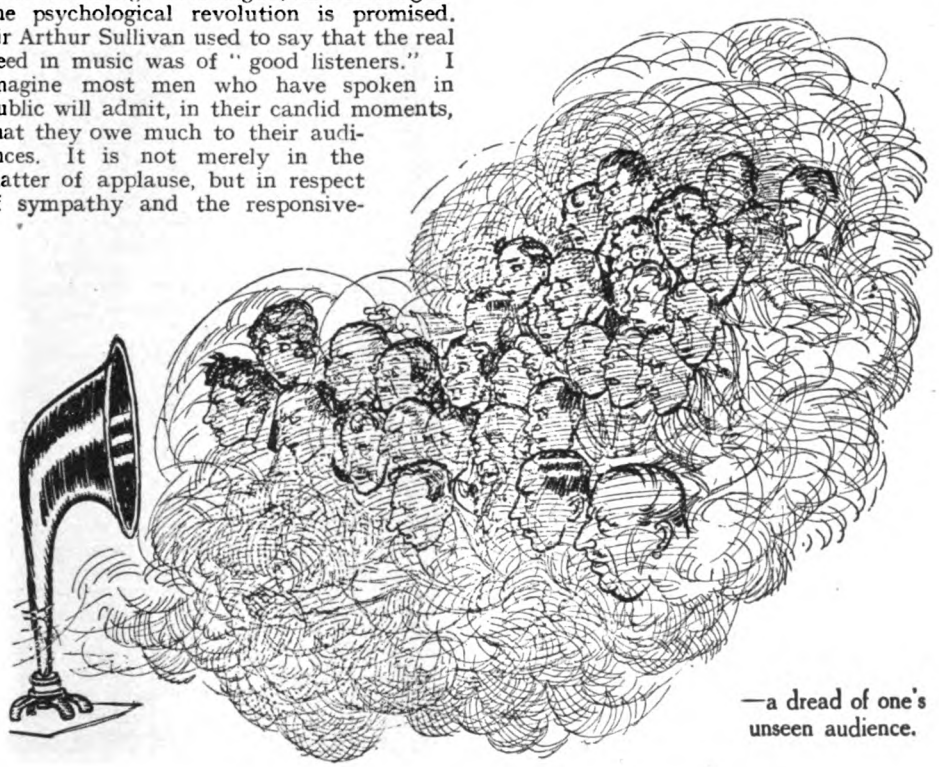
It is not only in respect of the fundamental conceptions of space and the fundamental equipment of character that the telephone reveals a deficiency in human nature; it shows our inadequacy in respect of time. It is a time-saving machine which leaves us bereft of the power of accurately gauging the passage of time. Even a bishop with a telephone in his hand has been known to call twenty seconds by the aberrant description of five minutes. If the reader is incredulous I beg him to make a psychological experiment on himself. Let him take a stop-watch and put it face downwards and guess a twenty seconds' interval with the telephone at his ear.

Nor are the aberrancies always in the one direction, and I could suggest, if I were bold enough, certain differences between the superior sex and the inferior sex, though that might involve an indication as to which is superior and which is inferior. I remember a striking instance of a long-distance call to Newcastle-on-Tyne many years ago. My friend at the other end heard the bells of the cathedral strike. "They were the slowest chimes I ever heard," he said. "I am sure if I timed them there was half a minute between each stroke." So there is—if he depended upon his mental conjecture.

It may be that we are only at the beginning. It may be that in years to come these means of communication will develop the transmission of the written and of the spoken word far beyond any of our dreams. Some day we shall all be authors and speakers, and a few people in distant parts (and in nearer parts) of the world will read our writing and listen to our speech. A telephone manager in New Jersey had some such dream. "Why should anyone bother about knowledge?" he asked. "Let us have at the exchange end all the knowledge you require, dictionaries and encyclopædias and histories and books on science and philosophy. If you want to know anything,

ring us up and we will fill you with knowledge by return." It was a bold conception. It seemed to indicate, at last, the revolution which we had sought so long. And so the organism was equipped and the first question came: "I say, Enquiries, there's a funeral goin' by—who's dead?" And the dictionaries and the encyclopædias were of no avail.

Then they say that broadcasting will change the human mind and heart. Already the vivid dreamings have begun, and once again the psychological revolution is promised. Sir Arthur Sullivan used to say that the real need in music was of "good listeners." I imagine most men who have spoken in public will admit, in their candid moments, that they owe much to their audiences. It is not merely in the matter of applause, but in respect of sympathy and the responsiveness of the "group mind." I have just discussed with a friend his experiences in speaking in a hall from which his utterances were broadcasted to another. "I was perspiring with nervousness," he said, "lest the other audience should be hooting." The very kindness of the audience which he could see led his mind to dread unkindness from the audience which he could not see, on the well-known principles of give-and-take and of roundabouts-and-swings. Indeed, there are speakers so sensitive to this appreciation (in the best sense of the word) that under the conditions of this new and wonderful dissemination of ideas they are overcome. It is a new type of stage-fright. Here again we are at the beginning only. We shall have to learn adaptation. It is our mental conservatism which is at fault. I have seen trembling hands write a telegram. I have heard of instances in sparsely-populated districts where draughts-boards were available in order that would-be users of an early telephone might steady their nerves by a quiet game before the great ordeal. Science and the adaptation of science call on us to go a little more than half-way to meet them. We expect these new inventions of themselves to modify our mental equipment, and when we look back we imagine that they have failed, whereas it may be whispered that the failure lies elsewhere. We have expected too much and we have adapted ourselves too little.



—a dread of one's unseen audience.

And just as this is written I see the account of M. Edouard Belin's discovery of long-distance vision. By this means pictures and the like can be transmitted without wires. "Television is at hand." There can be no doubt that development in this direction has promised success for some time. Our dear old friend "the revolution in human nature" begins once again his promises. I would not discourage him for a moment. I believe we are on the eve of television, just as I am sure that telephotography is possible. But I am even more confident that human nature will be very slow to adapt itself to so tremendous a venture.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

694.—A GENERAL ELECTION.

HERE is a little perplexity, quite up to date. I feel sure that it will interest my readers, especially when I say that notwithstanding its apparent difficulty it is really absurdly easy—if you happen to know how to do it. In how many different ways may a Parliament of 615 members be elected if there are only four parties, Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists, and Independents? You see you might have C. 310, L. 152, S. 150, I. 3; or C. 0, L. 0, S. 0, I. 615; or C. 205, L. 205, S. 205, I. 0; and so on. The candidates are indistinguishable, as we are only concerned with the party numbers.

695.—AN ENIGMA.

WHAT word is that which, though consisting of four syllables, is properly spelt in two letters only, and, though openly seen, is still invisible?

696.—AN EPITAPH (A.D. 1538).

HERE lie
Two grandmothers, with their two granddaughters;
Two husbands, with their two wives;
Two fathers, with their two daughters;
Two mothers, with their two sons;
Two maidens, with their two mothers;
Two sisters, with their two brothers;
Yet only six in all lie buried here:
All born legitimate, from incest clear.

How might this happen?

697.—FOR JUVENILES.

IF Tom gives Dick one apple they will have equal, but if instead Dick gives Tom one he will then have half as many as Tom. How many apples does each possess?

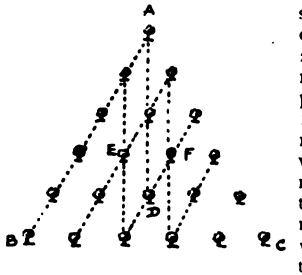
Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

688.—SIMPLE DIVISION.

WE may divide 8 5 7 1 4 2 by 3 by simply transferring the 2 from the end to the beginning. Or 4 2 8 5 7 1, by transferring the 1.

689.—THE TRIANGULAR PLANTATION.

THE number of ways in which 3 trees may be selected from 21 is $\frac{21 \times 20 \times 19}{1 \times 2 \times 3}$ or 1,330, and a triangle may be formed with any one of these selections that does not happen to be three in a straight line. Let us therefore enumerate these cases of three in a line.

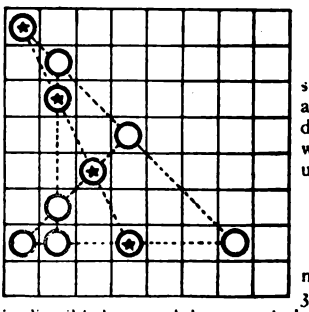


Three trees may be selected from the dotted line, A B, in 20 ways, from the next line of 5 trees parallel with it in 10 ways, from the next line of 4 in 4 ways, and from the next parallel of 3 trees in 1 way, making in all 35 ways in that direction. Similarly B C and the lines parallel with it will give 35 ways, and A C and the lines parallel with it 35 ways. Then A D and the two lines parallel with it will give 3 ways, and similarly B F and C E, with their parallels, will give 3 ways each. Hence 3 trees in a straight line may be selected in $35+35+35+3+3+3 = 114$ different ways. Therefore $1,330-114 = 1,216$ must be the required number of ways of selecting three trees that will form the points of a triangle.

690.—DOLLARS AND CENTS.

THE man must have entered the store with 99·98 dollars in his pocket.

691.—A PUZZLE WITH DRAUGHTS.



THE illustration shows the new arrangement. Those draughts marked with a star remain undisturbed.

692.—THREES AND SEVENS.

THE smallest number possible is 3,333,377,733, which is divisible by 3 and by 7, and the sum of its digits (42) also divisible by 3 and by 7. There must be at fewest three 7's and seven 3's, and the 7's must be placed as far to the right as possible.

693.—A WORD SQUARE.

C H A S E
H A V E N
A V O I D
S E I Z E
E N D E D

684.—A DIGITAL DIFFICULTY.

THERE are four solutions, as follows: 2,438,195,760; 3,785,942,160; 4,753,869,120; 4,876,391,520. The last figure must be 0. Any arrangement with an even figure next to the 0 will be divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, and 18. We have therefore only to consider 7, 11, 13, 16, and 17. To be divisible by 11 the odd digits must sum to 28 and the even to 17, or *vice versa*. To be divisible by $7 \times 11 \times 13 = 1,001$, if we ignore the 0, the numbers formed by the first three and the last three digits must sum to the middle three. (Note that the third case above is really 474—1,386—912, with the 1 carried forward and added to the 4.) But, as the large majority have found, we cannot do better than take the lowest multiple (8a) of the L.C.M. of the divisors (12,252,240), which gives ten figures (this is 1,004,683,680) and keep on adding that L.C.M. until all digits are different. The 199th multiple will give us the first answer, 309 the second, 388 the third, and 398 the fourth. The work can be considerably shortened by leaping over groups where figures will obviously be repeated. The first solutions were received (by the same post) from C. H. Haley and A. E. Jones. At the time of writing the only correspondents who have sent me all four solutions are R. S. Odlin, E. T. Richards, W. Hough, A. W. Rogers, H. W. Stockman, J. I. H. Milne, G. N. Watson, Alex. Fraser, and J. M. Warden. The last three frankly admit that they ground out the answers on a calculating machine. In that way all the answers may be obtained in about twenty minutes!

POSTAGE-STAMPS (in December issue). By a curious oversight the largest and smallest solutions were not given. They are 2s. 1d. (write 9, 6, 10, 7, 8, 5, 12, 4 round the square, starting at a corner), and 6½d. (2, 1½, 3, 2½, 1, 5, ½, 4).

GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIV. OF MICH.
MAY 6 - 1924

NEW POEM BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

A. CONAN DOYLE

Stacy Aumonier F. Britten Austin

Mrs. Belloc Lowndes

For men—for women for every day

Men are as fond as women of a delicate perfume—provided it is refreshing, so VINOLIA is the soap for all. Some extol its fragrance, others its lather, but all praise its purity.

Hot water is not necessary to call forth its cleansing power, nor hard rubbing its fragrant foam. Prove these qualities by testing them for yourself.

6d. per tablet
1/6 per box of 3 tablets
Large size bath tablets 10d. each.

Vinolia
PREMIER SOAP

First for Fragrance—Premier for Purity

VINOLIA CO. LTD. LONDON.

Murray's
Extra Cream *Caramels*

Raiding the Chief.

THERE'S every excuse for this apparent impoliteness when you know the outstanding perfection of these fresh cream and pure sugar confections. Undoubtedly they are

THE CHIEF OF CARAMELS.

Of All Confectioners.

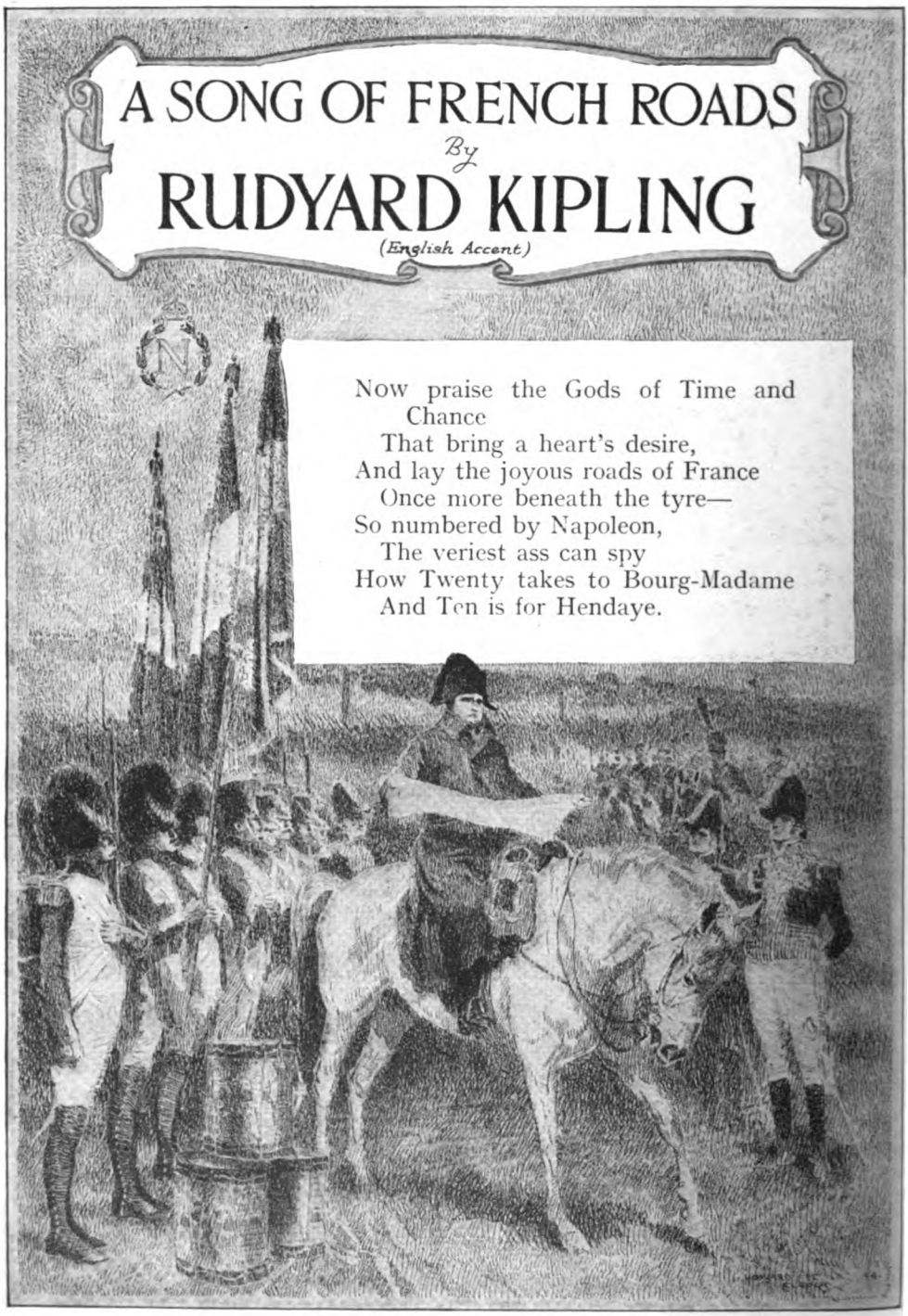
Manufactured by
R. S. MURRAY & CO., LTD.,
Fleet Works, Clerkenwell Rd., London, E.C.1.

Original Makers of Caramels in Great Britain.

The Caramel Chief.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
May, 1924.

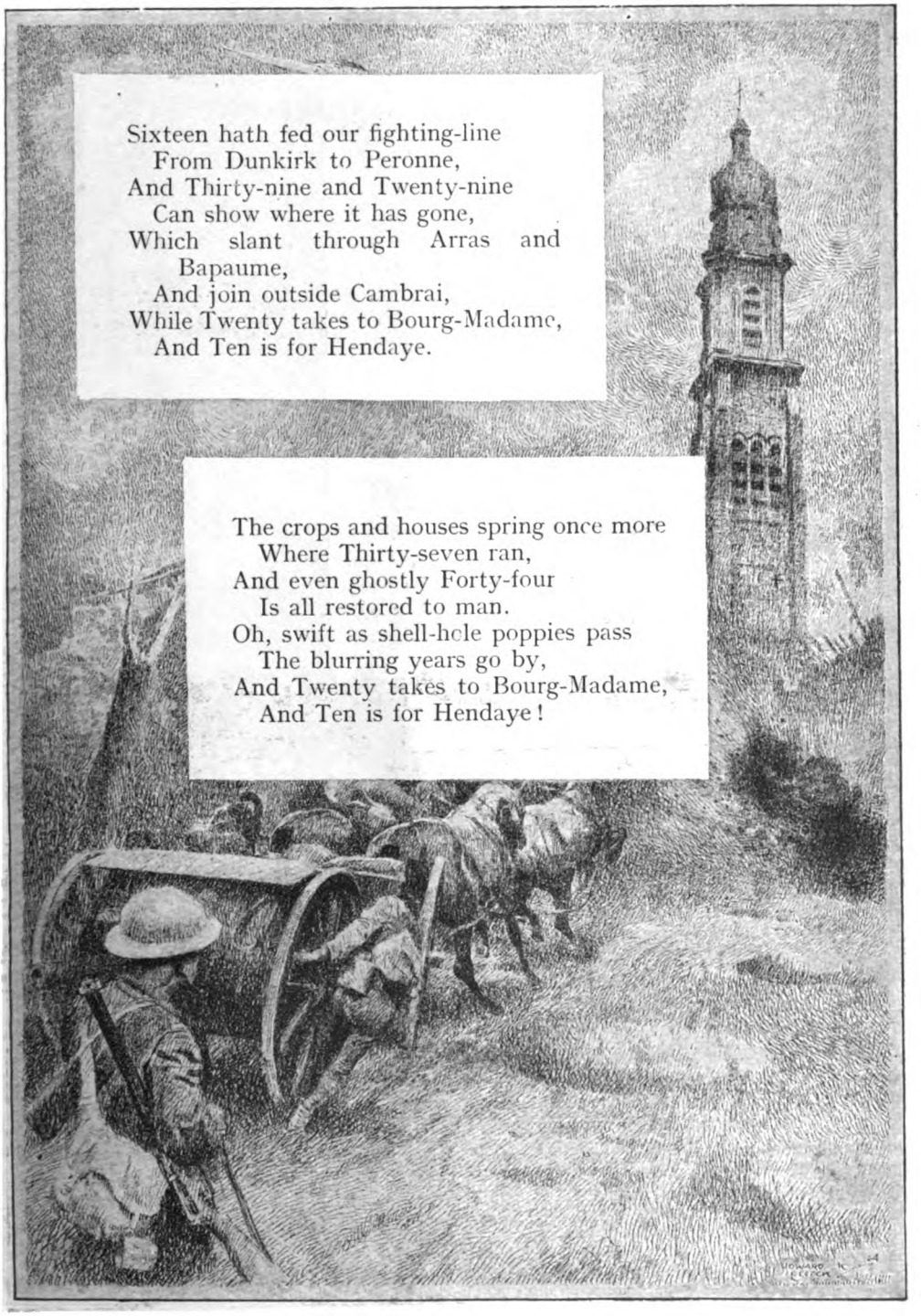
The National Roads of France are numbered throughout, and carry their numbers upon each kilometre stone. By following these indications, comprehensible even to strangers, the tourist can see at a glance if he is on the correct road. For example, Route National No. 20 conducts from Paris to the Spanish frontier at Bourg-Madame, in the Eastern Pyrenees; and No. 10 to the same frontier at Hendaye, on the Bay of Biscay.—Guide Book.



Copyright, 1924, by Rudyard Kipling.

A SONG OF FRENCH ROADS

By RUDYARD KIPLING

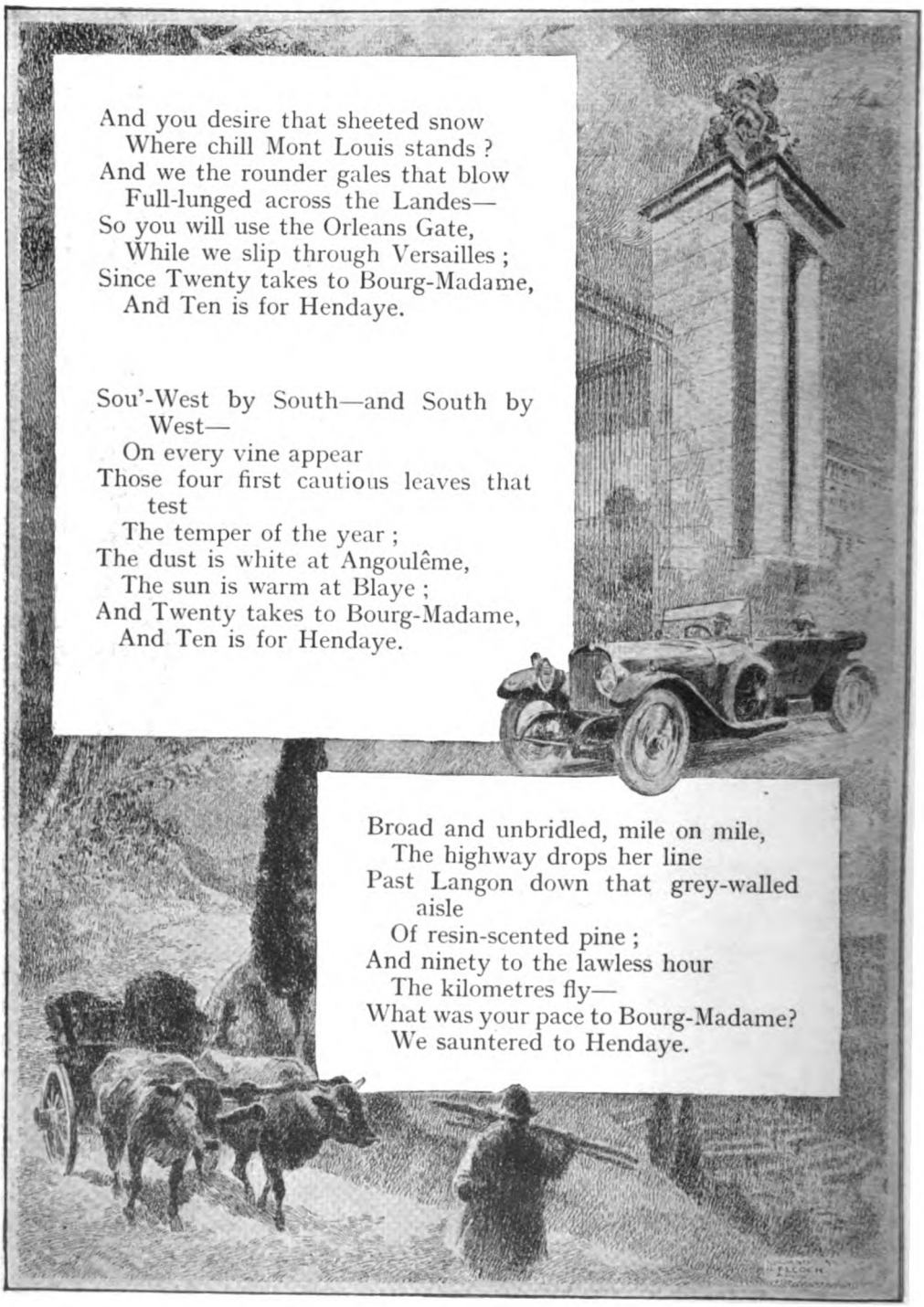


Sixteen hath fed our fighting-line
From Dunkirk to Peronne,
And Thirty-nine and Twenty-nine
Can show where it has gone,
Which slant through Arras and Bapaume,
And join outside Cambrai,
While Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame,
And Ten is for Hendaye.

The crops and houses spring once more
Where Thirty-seven ran,
And even ghostly Forty-four
Is all restored to man.
Oh, swift as shell-hole poppies pass
The blurring years go by,
And Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame,
And Ten is for Hendaye!

A SONG OF FRENCH ROADS

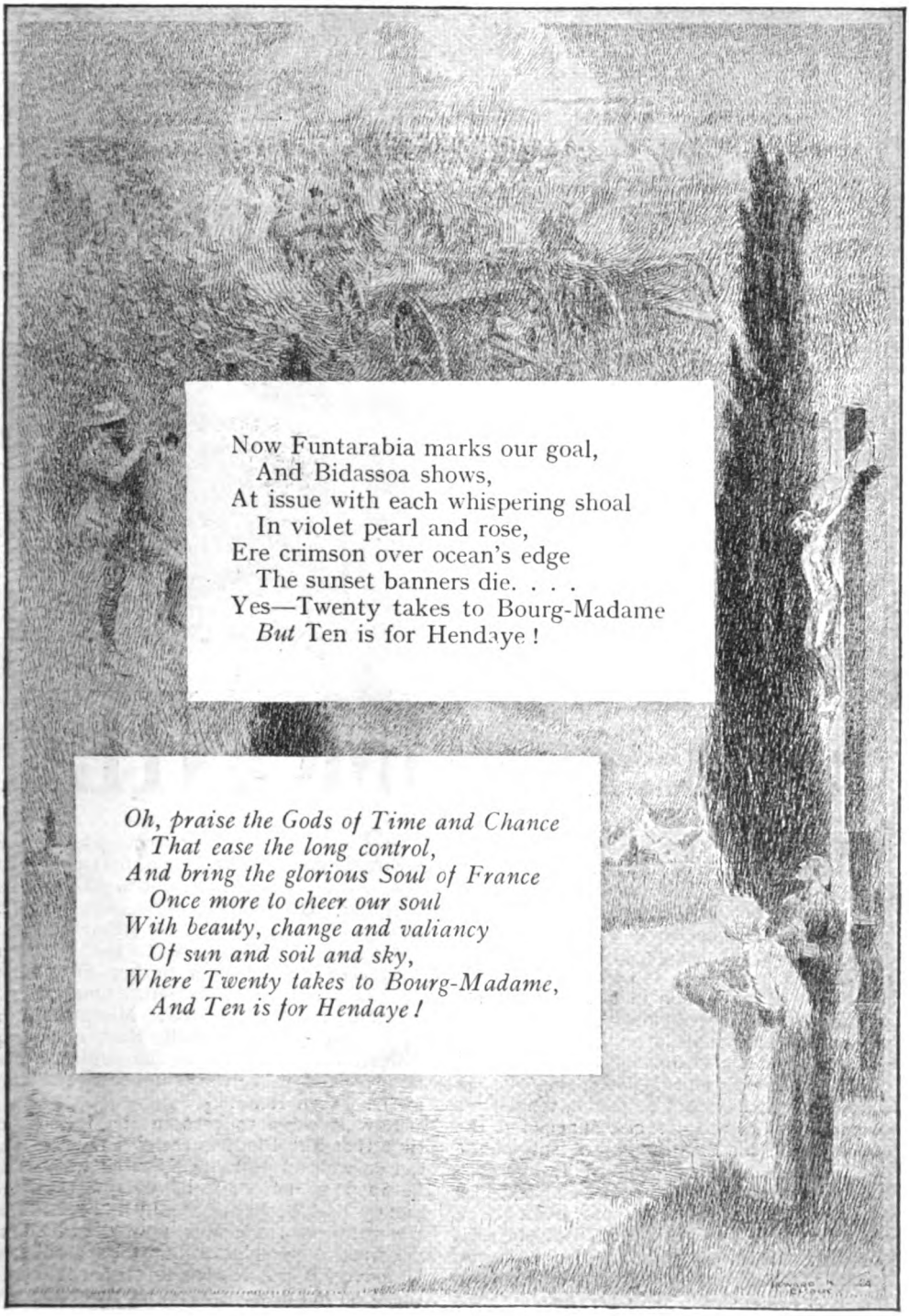
By RUDYARD KIPLING



And you desire that sheeted snow
Where chill Mont Louis stands?
And we the rounder gales that blow
Full-lunged across the Landes—
So you will use the Orleans Gate,
While we slip through Versailles;
Since Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame,
And Ten is for Hendaye.

Sou'-West by South—and South by West—
On every vine appear
Those four first cautious leaves that test
The temper of the year;
The dust is white at Angoulême,
The sun is warm at Blaye;
And Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame,
And Ten is for Hendaye.

Broad and unbridled, mile on mile,
The highway drops her line
Past Langon down that grey-walled aisle
Of resin-scented pine;
And ninety to the lawless hour
The kilometres fly—
What was your pace to Bourg-Madame?
We sauntered to Hendaye.



Now Funtarabia marks our goal,
And Bidassoa shows,
At issue with each whispering shoal
In violet pearl and rose,
Ere crimson over ocean's edge
The sunset banners die. . . .
Yes—Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame
But Ten is for Hendaye!

Oh, praise the Gods of Time and Chance
That ease the long control,
And bring the glorious Soul of France
Once more to cheer our soul
With beauty, change and valiancy
Of sun and soil and sky,
Where Twenty takes to Bourg-Madame,
And Ten is for Hendaye!

The Persistent Mother

by

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THE refinement of the Bindloss family was a by-word in Tibbelsford.

Mr. Bindloss himself was a retired printer. Now, as everyone knows, printing is a most respectable profession, but retirement is the most refined profession of all. It suggests vested interests, getting up late in the morning, having a nap in the afternoon, and voting for keeping things stable. But Mr. Bindloss was by no means an inactive man. He was a sidesman at St. Mark's Church, tended his own garden, grew tomatoes, supervised the education of his two daughters, sat on the committee of the Tibbelsford Temperance League and the Domestic Pets' Defence League. Mrs. Bindloss was even more refined, for it was rumoured that she was distantly related to a lord. She certainly spoke in that thin, precise manner which was easily associable with the aristocracy; a manner which her daughters imitated to perfection. The elder daughter, Gwendoline, who was sixteen, was in her last term at Miss Langton Matravers' school; whilst the younger daughter, Mildred, was in her first term at that same institution. One might mention in passing that Miss Langton Matravers prided herself that she only catered for daughters of the gentry. The family lived in a neat, semi-detached villa in the Quorn Road.

Now it came to pass in the fullness of time that Mr. Bindloss realized that he was not so well off as he thought he was, or as he used to be. He discovered that the money that he had made by honest toil in the printing trade was now described as unearned increment, and taxed accordingly. Moreover, it did not go so far as it did in the good old days of his early retirement.

Copyright, 1924, by Stacy Aumonier.

"Put that trowel down, Julian, and listen to me," said his wife.

One spring morning Mr. Bindloss was in the garden thinning out some young cabbage plants, when his wife came out to him holding a letter in her hand.

"I've had a letter from Agnes," she said.

"Oh!" said Mr. Bindloss.

"She says that the Northallertons have gone to live at Tollinghurst."

"Really!" said Mr. Bindloss.

"Yes. Do you know that young Archie Northallerton may one day be Lord Windlass?"

"Oh, that's nice!" said Mr. Bindloss, who was apt to be a little preoccupied when gardening.

"Put that trowel down, Julian, and listen to me," said his wife.

Mr. Bindloss knew when he was spoken to, and he obeyed.

"Young Archie is just fourteen, Tollinghurst is only half an hour's journey by train. Does anything strike you?"

"Not forcibly," replied Mr. Bindloss, scratching his head behind the left ear.

"No, I suppose it wouldn't," snapped the refined Mrs. Bindloss. "Does it not occur to you that this boy is fourteen—that is to say, that he is two years older than Mildred and two years younger than Gwen?"

The eyes of Mr. Bindloss narrowed. His wife's implication became clear to him. "What a thing it is to have a clever wife," he said, defensively; then added: "It's a bit young to think of—er—marriage."

"It's not too young to *begin* to think about it."

"No, no, that's true, that's very true. What do you propose to do, my dear?"

"Write to his mother, and suggest their bringing or sending the boy over for the day."

"Excellent. You know her, of course?"

"I haven't actually met her, but she will

know of me, naturally. We are distantly related."

"You say the boy *may be* Lord Cutlass?"

"Windlass, not Cutlass. It's like this—my sister married a Bream, who are cousins to the Northallertons. Henry Bolsover Northallerton, the father of this boy, is the younger brother of Lord Windlass, who is a middle-aged bachelor. If he leaves no heirs, Archie will inherit the estates and the title."

"I see, yours is not exactly a blood relationship, then. I mean to say, there would be no obstacles——"

"No obstacles at all. The Northallertons in any case are a very good family and very wealthy."

"Well, of course, my dear, I sha'n't stand in your way. Indeed, I'll do my best to make the young gentleman's visit enjoyable." So Mr. Bindloss returned to his cabbages and Mrs. Bindloss to the library, where she wrote the following letter :—

"*Dear Mrs. Northallerton,—*

"*Forgive my writing you, as I don't think we have ever actually met. My dear sister's husband, Samuel Bream, used to speak so affectionately about you all. Happening to hear that you have come to live in the neighbourhood, I wonder whether you would give us the great pleasure of a visit. My dear husband, who has retired from business, and my two daughters and myself would be delighted to welcome you. We live in a modest way, but we have a very pleasant garden, as this is my husband's special hobby. I hear you have a small boy. We should be so pleased if you would bring him too, as we are all devoted to boys.*

"*Believe me, dear Mrs. Northallerton,*

"*Yrs cordially,*

"CORA BINDLOSS."

This letter elicited no reply for five days. At length one morning came the following :—

"*Dear Mrs. Bindloss,—*

"*Thank you for your letter. Yes, I remember hearing my cousin speak of you. I'm afraid I cannot come over to see you just now, as I have several house-parties coming on, and Archie is attending school. Perhaps some time when you are in the neighbourhood you will give me a call.*

"*Yrs sincerely,*

"CONSTANCE NORTHALLERTON."

To some people this reply would have been accepted as rather in the nature of a snub, but not so to Mrs. Bindloss.

She waited fourteen days. It is possible that she might have called on Mrs. Northallerton sooner, but this interlude had been devoted to the making of an ill-afforded new frock. At the end of that period she took the train to Tollinghurst, and walked sedately up to "The Three Gables," only alas! to find that Mrs. Northallerton had gone up to town for a few days. Whatever faults Mrs. Bindloss may have had, a lack of tenacity of purpose was not one. Three times during the course of a fortnight she "happened to be in the neighbourhood" of Tollinghurst.

On the third occasion she ran her quarry to earth. Mrs. Northallerton was just going out, but she was graciously pleased to entertain Mrs. Bindloss for a quarter of an hour. The latter was at her very best. She flattered her hostess about her house, her clothes, her appearance, and her intelligence in accents so refined as to be almost painful. No one is entirely immune to flattery, and Mrs. Northallerton could not help but be polite, and a little cordial. Towards the end of the interview Mrs. Bindloss said :—

"And how is that dear boy of yours? Archie, isn't his name?"

"Oh, he's very well. He's at school. He goes to Headingly, you know."

"Really, *how* interesting!" exclaimed Mrs. Bindloss. "I hear it's such an excellent school. It is the great grief of my husband and myself that we never had a boy. My husband *adores* boys. It would be *so* delightful if you would let—er—Archie come over and see us one day—perhaps during the holidays."

"Why, of course, I expect he would like to come very much," replied Mrs. Northallerton, without any great show of enthusiasm. "He's just got his school cap—maroon and black stripes. He's very pleased with himself."

"How delightful! I do think maroon and black is a *delightful* combination. I expect he's a very clever boy, isn't he?"

"They seem to think so, Mrs. Bindloss. He's very good at Latin and botany."

"Really, *how* splendid, Mrs. Northallerton. He would get on admirably with my husband. He doesn't know *much* Latin. He can't *speak* it, you know; but he knows *all* about botany. You should see the tomatoes he grows."

"Indeed! Well, it's very good of you to call, but I'm afraid I really must be going now."

"Of course. Oh, dear! I'm afraid I'm an awful chatterbox, especially when I meet someone *really* interesting."

When Mrs. Bindloss returned home that evening she was able to announce that the boy was certainly coming over to visit the family during the holidays. She also said that her husband and both the girls were to study hard at Latin and botany. Now, this command led to a good deal of unpleasantness.

The little Latin that Mr. Bindloss had learnt at school he had almost entirely forgotten. It seemed rather much to expect, at his time of life, that at the end of a day's gardening, when his natural inclinations were to sit down and read the newspaper, he should have to try and learn up passages from Virgil. The girls said they hated botany and had no books on it. This defect was rapidly put right by Mrs. Bindloss, who went into the town and bought Green's "Life of the Plant" and Morgan's "Botany for Beginners."

"You will study these books, Gwendoline and Mildred, or there will be no Flower Show and Church Bazaar for you next month."

Under this dire menace the two girls steeled themselves to grasp the first principles of plant life. And during the ensuing summer months Mrs. Bindloss did her best to train their minds in some of the principles of human life. She did it quietly and insinuatingly. She pointed out how in a few years' time they would come to the stage when they would require to marry. She limned all the beauties and advantages of married life. She dwelt upon her own happy married life, only handicapped by the eternal lack of funds. Everything was *so* expensive now. Unless one was very, very rich, one had to do one's own housework. The two girls, she knew, hated housework. Then she began gradually to talk about young Archie Northallerton. She had heard that he was a perfectly charming boy, very kind, clever, and gentlemanly. He would one day probably be Lord Windlass; in any case he would be very rich. A woman married to him would be a real Lady, and would never have to do any housework at all. She did not think it advisable to go any further. The affair did not make much impression on Mildred. She was of the age which is more interested in meringues than marriage. But Gwendoline was sixteen, and was beginning to be absorbed in erotic literature. In reading of the doings of Ivanhoe and Lancelot it occurred to her sometimes that Tibbelsford was a drab little town. And she dreamed of a knight on a white charger riding up to Number 27, Quorn Road, and snatching her up—one evening perhaps when she was watering the syringa in the front garden—and carrying her off and whispering in her ear:—

"Come, my beloved, I will make you a Lady."

As the summer advanced the family began to discuss the best way to entertain the future lord. It was to be assumed that it would be a fine day. Now, Mr. Bindloss took a great pride in his lawn, which he kept rolled and cut himself. He had never allowed tennis or any other game to be played on it, but, discussing the matter in bed one night with his wife, they agreed that a game of some sort would have obvious advantages. It would bring the young people into more intimate relationship. But tennis? None of the family played tennis, and it was doubtful if the lawn was quite large enough. But what about croquet. Croquet was a nice quiet game that didn't require running about, and would not be likely to damage the flower-beds. Yes, croquet they decided was just the thing.

The next day Mr. Bindloss wrote up to town and had a croquet set sent down. When it arrived he and his wife pored over the rules. They seemed extremely complicated, and the girls were called in to give their help. The only solution seemed to be to set up the hoops and experiment.

"We must be able to play a decent game when Archie comes," said Gwendoline, who quickly showed herself the most proficient of the family. Nearly every afternoon for some weeks the Bindloss family practised croquet, much to the astonishment of their neighbours. Mr. Bindloss had to explain to Mr. Longman next door that the exercise was good for the girls. This was a good enough reason, but whatever physical benefits may have accrued, it cannot be said that the mental effect was satisfactory. There is, perhaps, no game at which people can so easily and persistently lose their tempers as croquet. There were furious arguments and disputes about the rules. Moreover, Mr. Bindloss objected to being beaten, and the girls accused him of cheating. Mrs. Bindloss always played with the wrong ball, and swore it was the right one. Eventually the parents gave it up, and left the girls to play alone. Mildred hated the game, and was forced to play as though it were taking medicine.

They also bought a box of draughts and a box of Halma, in case it should be a wet day when Archie came. Early in July Mrs. Bindloss again wrote to Mrs. Northallerton, a chatty, friendly little letter, ending up by hoping that at the end of the term Mrs. Northallerton would remember her promise to bring Archie over for the day.

She received no reply to this and it was near the end of July. The situation was desperate. She knew the school must have broken up. Some women would have given up in despair, but not so Mrs. Bindloss. She wrote once more and said that as the weather was so fine and Mr. Bindloss's roses were now at their best, wouldn't Mrs. Northallerton and Archie come over

the following Wednesday to lunch and spend the afternoon? Her persistence reaped its reward. Two days later came a telegram from somewhere in Yorkshire: "Many thanks; am arranging to send Archie next Wednesday. Train arrives 12.45. Northallerton."

Triumph! Mrs. Bindloss glowed with it. And then what to-do there was! The girls' new taffeta frocks had been in preparation some time and were quickly finished off. Mr. Bindloss was bought a new alpaca coat and Panama hat. A new loose cover was made for the best arm-chair in the drawing-room. And a man was sent for to mend all kinds of household defects, attention to which was considerably overdue.

"And now we must consider the lunch and the tea," said Mrs. Bindloss.

It was decided that you could not give a potential lord anything less than chicken. The question was, ought they to have soup and fish as well? After a deal of argument they decided to have soup only, for the reason that they were short of plates, and if Annie, the daily help, had to wash up plates between courses she would probably lose her head. Of course there must be some nice sweets and pastry, but these could be prepared beforehand. And for tea there must be a goodly assortment of cakes, jam, and cream.

"A young gentleman like that is sure to appreciate such things," said Mrs. Bindloss, "and if we do it well he will be more likely to come again."

AT length the great day dawned. Mrs. Bindloss was up early. She peered out of her bedroom window anxiously. Yes, the day promised to be fine. She got up and dressed and roused the rest of the family. There would be plenty to do for everyone. Annie couldn't be relied on to cook such an elaborate meal by herself. Mrs. Bindloss had had to scold her only the day before for carelessness. Mrs. Bindloss dressed feverishly. Annie, of course, was late. She would be on such an important occasion. Came half-past seven and then eight, and still no Annie. The girls were bustled out of bed and made to get the breakfast. The family started the day with bad tempers.

"It's no good getting agitated," said Mr. Bindloss, coming into the dining-room just as the breakfast was on the table.

"It's all very well for some people," snapped Mrs. Bindloss. "Some people don't have all the work and worry of it."

After a sketchy breakfast, Mildred was sent into the town on her bicycle to beat up the lagging Annie. She returned in half an hour's time with a message from Miss Annie Woppins to the effect that that lady had no longer any intention of "obliging Mrs. B. after the saucy way she spoke to her yesterday."

Consternation and fury in the Bindloss family.

"We must make the best of it," said Mr. Bindloss, looking up from his newspaper and lighting his pipe. "We must meet the situation with Christian fortitude."

"Yes, and perhaps you'll go and get some coals in," said Mrs. Bindloss. "Mildred, get on your bicycle again and go and see if you can get Mrs. Betts or that other woman in Stone's Passage—what's her name?—the one with a moustache."

"We can't have that awful apparition about for Archie to see," exclaimed Gwen.

"You'd better get on with the housework," said Mrs. Bindloss. "And be quick about it! And, Mildred, on the way back, call at Fleming's and order the dogcart to be here sharp at twelve, to take some of us to the station. Julian, after you've got the coals in, you can clean the knives, and then roll the lawn, and put up the croquet hoops."

Mrs. Bindloss's annoyance about the defection of Annie was mellowed by a certain cynical enjoyment at rubbing it in about the sordidness of domestic drudgery. It would be an object-lesson to the girls. Having borne the burden of the fight so far, she meant to stand no nonsense from the family. For the next few hours the house was in a turmoil. Mildred returned to say that neither Mrs. Betts nor the woman with a moustache was available. Mrs. Bindloss proceeded with her preparations for lunch, whilst her husband and daughters were sent flying round at her commands. It was decided that the correct thing would be for Mr. and Mrs. Bindloss to go to the station themselves in the dogcart to meet the future Lord Windlass, whilst the girls remained behind to change into their new taffeta frocks, and at the same time to keep an eye on the lunch. It must be acknowledged that under the very trying circumstances Mrs. Bindloss managed efficiently. All the preparations were carefully made, and when the dogcart arrived at twelve o'clock she was ready in the hall pulling on her new white kid gloves.

They arrived at the station a good quarter of an hour before the train came in. Mrs. Bindloss was one of those women who are always pecking at their husbands. That is to say, she was always darting at him and pulling his waistcoat down, putting his tie straight, or picking little bits of cotton off his coat. This quarter of an hour was fully occupied in this way, amplified by various wishing-to-goodnesses he would

There is, perhaps, no game at which people can so easily and persistently lose their tempers as croquet.

do this, that, and the other in regard to his clothes.

At length the train came in. It was a slack hour, and a mere handful of people got out. In this company it was not difficult to discriminate which was the future

Lord Windlass. The rest were ordinary market folk. Apart from being obviously what is known as "upper class," he was wearing the maroon and black striped cap which his mother had spoken to Mrs. Bindloss about. He came swinging along the platform, and he was carrying—curiously enough—two fishing-rods in canvas coverings and a brown-paper parcel.

"Leave this to me," whispered Mrs. Bindloss. When the boy was within hailing distance she cried out in her most refined accents :—

"So here you are, Archie! Welcome to Tibbelsford!"

She held out her hand, and he took it shyly. On close examination it could not be said that this future Lord Windlass was exactly prepossessing in appearance. For a boy of fourteen he was distinctly too fat. His round, fat face was flabby, and indeed the lower part of his face even gave the appearance of having double chins. His expression was taciturn, with a shy reserve of maliciousness.

"You're just in time for lunch," added Mrs. Bindloss, who was avid to begin the lavish entertaining. "I expect you're ready for your lunch after your journey."

Archie mumbled something about being "able to peck a bit," and the three walked out of the station and got into the dogcart.

WHEN they were seated, Mrs. Bindloss broke out :—

"Now, my dear Archie, I have a most dreadful confession to make. I don't know what you'll think, considering what you—er—are used to. But the whole of our domestic service has broken down. I don't know whatever kind of lunch we shall be able to provide. I do hope you won't mind taking pot-luck. Our cook is ill in bed, and we're in *such* a muddle."

They couldn't hear what the boy replied, owing to the rattle of the wheels and the noise of the town. Mrs. Bindloss continued :—

"And how is your dear mother?"

"She's all right."

"Such a charming woman, *so* handsome, so intellectual!"

The rest of the conversation on the way to the house consisted of a wild babble of effusive comment from Mrs. Bindloss, a certain amount of forced hilarity from Mr. Bindloss, checked by almost inaudible monosyllables from the boy.

"He's very shy," Mrs. Bindloss whispered to her husband as they descended from the dogcart. Gwendoline was on the lawn.

Mrs. Bindloss called out :—

"Ah, here we are, dear! This is my eldest girl, Gwendoline. I hope you'll be great friends. Where is Mildred? Reading, I expect. Both my girls are great readers. Are you fond of reading, Archie?"

He was understood to say either "yes" or "no."

It was then Mr. Bindloss's turn to have something to say.

"Hullo, I see you've brought fishing-rods. I'm afraid we haven't any fishing here."

"Haven't you?" said Archie, quite distinctly.

They entered the hall, and he put down his rods and his brown-paper parcel, and took a stone bottle of ginger-beer out of his pocket and laid it beside them.

"Oh, dear! boys will be pueri," said Mr. Bindloss, who was preparing for his Latin campaign. "He's brought a bottle of ginger-beer, and I do believe—this parcel is——"

"Really, Julian, Archie's parcel is no business of yours."

"They're sandwiches," said the visitor. This rather surprising statement was robbed of further comment by Mildred's entrance, rubbing her hands on her apron, which she had forgotten to remove. She had been dishing up the vegetables.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Bindloss. "Here's our younger pride, Mildred. Mildred, dear, what are you wearing that apron for? Have you been working at your plants in the conservatory?"

"No, mother, I—er——" She held out her hand to Archie and said timidly : "How are you?"

"Pretty dicky," replied the boy.

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Bindloss. "Pretty dicky! But, my dear boy, why didn't you tell me? What can we do? Is there anything you'd like? A little sal volatile, perhaps. How do you feel?"

"Oh, I don't know," he answered.

"But this is most distressing. Do you feel like having any lunch?"

"I expect I could peck a bit."

There is no denying that the future Lord Windlass had not made a very auspicious start. He was plain, surly; he arrived with fishing-rods, sandwiches, and ginger-beer—whatever kind of people did his mother think they were?—and on top of this he announced that he felt "dicky."

"Come on then, Julian, take Archie upstairs. Perhaps he would like a wash. He may feel better after lunch."

While he was upstairs, the lunch was whipped on to the table. It must be acknowledged that for an invalid Archie "pecked"

"So here you are, Archie! Welcome to Tibbelsford!"

remarkably well. He had two wings of chicken, a large slice of breast, the parson's nose, two sausages, a liberal helping of sprouts and potatoes, some coffee jelly, three mince-pies, a banana, an apple, and some nuts and chocolates. Apart from eating, his enthusiasms appeared dormant. They could get him to talk about nothing at all. Mrs. Bindloss talked about the Royal family, the weather, politics, her two daughters' cleverness—she didn't mention that it was Mildred who had smitched the brussels sprouts—the church, and the lower classes. Mr. Bindloss talked about Headingly College, the decay of society, and the beauties of plant life. Gwendoline recounted a beautiful romance she had just been reading called "The Mother Superior." Mildred stared at the future lord open-mouthed, too nervous and agitated to eat or speak. The young gentleman himself remained stubbornly monosyllabic. He only ventured

two remarks during the meal. Once he cocked his head on one side and said :—

" That picture's out of the straight."

And towards the end of the meal he said to Mildred :—

" Do you hunt ? "

On receiving an answer in the negative he relapsed into a settled gloom.

Once Mrs. Bindloss said :—

" After lunch, we thought you dear children might have a nice game of croquet. Do you play croquet, Archie ? "

" No," he said. " I hate croquet."

This was distinctly discouraging in view of the time and expense that had been devoted in preparing this innocuous game. However, concessions have to be made to the eccentricities of a future lord. By an elaborate process Mr. Bindloss led up to the value of doing things promptly, and came out proudly with :—

" As you know, Archie, Corripe tempus quod adest, o juvenes, ne heri moriemini." Anyone who happened to know the trouble that Mr. Bindloss had had to memorize this old tag would sympathize with him in his disappointment when he regarded the face of his guest. It expressed an uncomfortable disgust. Neither did he display any excitement over the girls' careful drawings of flowers and fauna.

AFTER lunch, however, he appeared in a better humour. On his own responsibility he suggested a game which he called " Yoics." It had to be played in a room, so they repaired to the drawing-room. The game was this. Each of the three players had to occupy a wall, touching it with their hands. Then the one facing the blank wall had to call out " Yoics ! I'm going over." Then he or she had to throw themselves on the ground and scramble on all fours to the opposite wall before the other two—also on all fours—met in the middle and touched hands. If he or she failed to get there, then they all changed walls and someone else tried.

It was not a game that Mrs. Bindloss would have recommended, because for one thing it meant rearranging the furniture ; furthermore, it did no good to the girls' new taffeta frocks. Nevertheless, she and her husband looked on and gave the impression of being greatly amused. They kept the game up for about twenty minutes, until, in an excess of anxiety to reach the opposite wall, Archie barged into the mahogany side-table and knocked it over, smashing the vase which dear Aunt Emily had given as a wedding present, and spilling the flowers and water all over Gwendoline's frock. Gwendoline had to go and change, and Mr. Bindloss suggested that as it was such a fine day they might play some game in the garden.

Archie was now getting more at home with the girls, and his greater intimacy was principally demonstrated by pushing them about. He had quite a pleasant wrestle with Mildred while Gwen was changing her frock. He guaranteed to throw her three times in five minutes, pinioning her head to the ground, and he did so quite successfully. He was less successful with Gwen, as he only threw her twice in ten minutes, and then at the expense of tearing her skirt.

" It's a pity you don't play croquet, Archie," said Mrs. Bindloss. " It's a most interesting game."

" No, I hate it. I'll tell you what we will do, though. Let's play croquet polo. You know, you have a goal at each end of the lawn, and you try and score goals."

This sounded a harmless enough game, and they played Archie and Mildred versus Mr. Bindloss and Gwen. They started gently tapping the wooden ball across, but no goals being forthcoming, Archie began to hit harder, and suddenly there was a yell. Mr. Bindloss had received a fierce blow on the ankle from Archie's drive. He limped off the field, and the girls protested that the game was too rough and dangerous.

" All right," said Archie, " but I bet I'll drive a croquet ball farther than you two girls put together."

Mr. and Mrs. Bindloss retired to the security of the drawing-room.

" He's a very curious boy," said Mr. Bindloss, rubbing his ankle.

" I'm sure he's really very nice. I expect he improves on acquaintance," replied his wife.

There was a sudden terrific crash, and they rushed to the window. Archie had driven his ball right through the glass of the tomato house.

" Oh, dear ! Oh, dear ! " Mr. Bindloss called out feebly.

It required great tact to dissuade the young gentleman from continuing this game without being definitely rude to him. It was not till he had trampled on a bed of lupins, broken a croquet mallet, and nearly knocked Mildred's eye out that they were able to get him to turn his attention to something else.

The nerves of Mr. Bindloss were getting on edge. He was accustomed to an afternoon nap, but, of course, such a thing was out of the question on a day like this. He was inclined to be querulous with his wife, an attitude which was hotly resented.

" You never think of the girls' interests," she said.

" Interests ! " exclaimed Mr. Bindloss. " A nice sort of son-in-law he'd make. I wish he'd go."

' He's getting on very well," said Mrs. Bindloss, looking out of the window. " I'm sure he's enjoying himself." Then she added breathlessly : " Julian, would you believe it ? He's—he's kissing Gwen in the tomato house ! "

" Kissing ! "

" Yes, he's got his arm round her waist."

" Well, I—I really—I—what ought we to do ? "

" Leave them alone. They are only children. Besides——"

She turned from the window and took up some knitting. There was silence from the garden for nearly twenty minutes. Then Mildred came running in.

" I say, mother, Archie says he feels sick," she exclaimed, excitedly.

" Sick ! " exclaimed Mrs. Bindloss.

" Sick ! " echoed Mr. Bindloss.

" Yes ; he looks it, too."

" Oh, dear, oh, dear ! " exclaimed both the parents. They hurried out into the garden. There was Archie sitting on the grass fanning himself. He certainly looked very queer.

" Oh, my dear Archie," exclaimed Mrs. Bindloss, " I'm so sorry. Won't you come in ? Let me get you something. Hadn't you better lie down ? "

He said " Yes," and they led him in. He looked so ill that they took him up to Mr. Bindloss's bedroom, and got him to lie down on the bed.

" Gwen," said Mrs. Bindloss, " run down the road and see if Dr. Burns is in. I'm sure Archie's mother would like us to have a doctor to him."

They gave him a little soda-water and left him. Gwen went for the doctor. And while she was gone a most surprising thing happened. A telegram arrived addressed to " Bindloss." Mrs. Bindloss naturally opened it, and, having opened it, gave a gasp of astonishment. She handed the telegram to her husband. It ran as follows :—

" Archie has mumps regret could not send him. Northallerton."

Mr. Bindloss repeated the word " mumps " three times, and stared helplessly at his wife.

" What does it mean ? " said Mrs. Bindloss, savagely, as though accusing her husband of some wicked treachery.

" How can they say they couldn't send him when he's upstairs all the time lying on my bed ? " said Mr. Bindloss, as though he had made a brilliant riposte.

" He must have escaped," interjected Mildred.

Mr. Bindloss was feverishly biting his nails. Suddenly he waggled his first finger at his wife.

" Does anything strike you ? Does anything strike you ? " he said.

" What ? "

" He's got mumps. That's what is the matter with him. When he arrived I thought he had double chins. But he's got mumps."

Mrs. Bindloss gasped.

" He's got mumps, and he's been kissing the girls, and now he's lying on my bed."

" It's an outrage," screamed Mrs. Bindloss. " What can we do ? "

" The only thing we can do is to wait for the doctor and then telegraph to Mrs. Northallerton."

GWENDOLINE happened to catch the doctor starting on his rounds. He came in, and he and the two parents went up to the bedroom. The doctor examined the boy.

" Yes," he said, " he's got mumps all right. He must remain here and not be moved."

" Oh, my dear Archie ! " said Mrs. Bindloss. " What a pity you didn't tell us ! But look here, my dear, here's a most curious telegram from your mother. Read it."

Archie was sorry for himself, and surly. He read the telegram and said :—

" That's not from my mother."

" How do you mean ? "

" My mother's name is Bloggs."

" What ! " yelled Mr. Bindloss.

" You never asked me my name. I was going out to do a bit of fishing, and you asked me home to lunch. That's all."

" But we called you Archie."

" My name is Archie. Archie Bloggs."

" But the maroon and black cap ! "

" Yes, I know. I go to Headingly. I know young Northallerton, awful little ass. There was an epidemic of mumps just as the school broke up."

" But who the devil ! " exclaimed Mr. Bindloss—" I mean, who is your father ? "

" Don't you know ? Bloggs's Sausages."

Mrs. Bindloss was nearly in tears.

" Do you mean to say we've taken all this trouble and your father is only a sausage——"

Mr. Bindloss saw red.

" It's an outrage ! " he yelled. " I shall prosecute you. You come here and get a good meal on false pretences. You smash up the drawing-room. You smash the greenhouse and the croquet mallet. You nearly break my leg. And on the top of it you go kissing the girls with mumps on you, and all the time you're not—you're not who you're supposed to be. You're only the son of a

They hurried out into the garden. There was Archie sitting on the grass fanning himself. He certainly looked very queer.

sausage—— By gad! I'll have you locked up."

The doctor intervened.

"You must excuse me, Mr. and Mrs. Bindloss. As I'm here in a professional capacity, I must ask you to keep the patient quiet. And he should not be moved from this room."

"We won't have him here."

"Well, that's not my business. I've given you my advice."

And the doctor went.

THERE are many people in Tibbelsford who consider that Mr. and Mrs. Bindloss behaved heartlessly in this matter. It is a point of controversy to this day. The visit from an indignant Mr. Samuel Bloggs, the father, did not help, perhaps, to pour oil on the troubled waters. There was certainly an acrimonious argument, and various cross threats of legal proceedings, but in the end the boy was sent home in an ambulance. The critics of the parents' behaviour did not, of course, know the inner history of their spiritual duress. People are apt to underestimate what parents will suffer for their children's interests, what indignities they will submit to. The girls fortunately did not get mumps, and two days later Mrs. Bindloss wrote to Mrs. Northallerton :—

"Dear Mrs. Northallerton,—

"We were so *grieved to hear about dear Archie. I* do *hope he is making a good recovery. We waited lunch nearly three-quarters of an hour for him. I hope before the holidays are over he will be well enough to come over for the day, and that you will be able to accompany him. It was so sweet of you to have tried to arrange it, and to have sent us the telegram. My husband joins me in sending our very best greetings, and hopes for Archie's speedy recovery.*

"Believe me, dear Mrs. Northallerton,

"Yrs vy sincerely,

"CORA BINDLOSS."

That is the kind of woman Mrs. Bindloss is. And that is the kind of spirit that has built cities, founded colonies, and enlarged empires.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER XIV.—*continued.*

Some Notable People.

SIR JAMES BARRIE. GRANT ALLEN.
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. JAMES PAYN.
SIR HENRY THOMPSON.

JAMES BARRIE is one of my oldest literary friends, and I knew him within a year or two of the time when we both came to London. He had just written his "Window in Thrums," and I, like all the world, acclaimed it. When I was lecturing in Scotland in 1893, he invited me to Kirriemuir, when I stayed some days with his family—splendid types of the folk who have made Scotland great. His father was a fine fellow, but his mother was wonderful, with a head and a heart—rare combinations—which made me class her with my own mother. Kirriemuir could by no means understand Barrie's success, and looked upon their great son as an inexplicable phenomenon. They were acutely aware, however, that tourists were arriving from all parts to see the place on account of Barrie's books. "I suppose you have read them?" I said to the wife of the local hotel man. "Aye, I've read them, and steep, steep, weary work it was," said she. She had some theory that it was a four-horse coach which her good man was running, and not the books at all, which accounted for the boom.

Great as are Barrie's plays—and some of them I think are very great—I wish he had never written a line for the theatre. The glamour of it and the—to him—easy success have diverted from literature the man with the purest style of his age. Plays are always ephemeral, however good, and are limited to a few, but Barrie's unborn books might have been an eternal and a universal asset of British literature. He has the chaste clarity which is the great style, which has been debased by a generation of wretched critics who have always confused what is clear with what is shallow, and what is turbid with what is profound. If a man's thought is precise, his rendering of it is precise, and muddy thoughts make obscure paragraphs. If I had to make my choice among modern stylists, I should pick Barrie for the lighter forms of expression and our British Winston Churchill for the more classical.

Barrie's great play—one of the finest in

Copyright, 1924, by A. Conan Doyle.

the language—is, of course, " The Admirable Crichton." I shall always hope that I had a hand in the fashioning of it. I say this not in complaint, but in satisfaction, for we all drop seeds into each other, and seldom know whence they come. We were walking together on the heath at Kirriemuir when I said, " I had a quaint thought in the night, Barrie. It was that a king was visiting India, and was wrecked on the way on some island far from the track of ships. Only he and one rather handy sailor were saved. They settled down to spend their lives together. Of course, the result would be that the sailor would become the king and the king the subject." We chuckled over the idea, and when " Crichton " appeared I seemed to see the fine plant which had grown from the tiny seed.

Barrie and I had one rather unfortunate venture together, in which I may say that the misfortune was chiefly mine, since I had really nothing to do with the matter, and yet shared all the trouble. However, I should have shared the honour and profit in case of success, so that I have no right to grumble. The facts were that Barrie had promised Mr. D'Oyly Carte that he would provide the libretto of a light opera for the Savoy. This was in the Gilbert days, when such a libretto was judged by a very high standard. It was an extraordinary commission for him to accept, and I have never yet been able to understand why he did so, unless, like Alexander, he wanted fresh worlds to conquer. On this occasion, however, he met with a set-back, and the opera, " Jane Annie," was one of the few failures in his brilliant career.

I was brought into the matter because Barrie's health failed on account of some family bereavement. I had an urgent telegram from him at Aldeburgh, and, going there, I found him very worried because he had bound himself by this contract, and he felt in his present state unable to go forward with it. There were to be two acts, and he had written the first one, and had the rough scenario of the second, with the complete sequence of events—if one may call it a sequence. Would I come in with him and help him to complete it as part-author? Of course I was very happy to serve him in any way. My heart sank, however, when, after giving the promise, I examined the work. Ideas and wit were there in abundance, but the form was bad. Also the plot itself was a feeble thing, with colourless characters, male and female, though the dialogue and the situations also were occasionally excellent. I did my best and wrote the lyrics for the second act and much of the dialogue, but it had to take the predestined shape. The result was not good, and on the first night I felt inclined, like Charles Lamb, to hiss it from my box. However, the actual comradeship of production was very amusing and interesting, and our failure was mainly painful to us because it let down the producer and the cast. We were well abused by the critics, but Barrie took it all in the bravest spirit, and I still retain the comic verses of consolation which I received from him next morning.

I also find in looking over my papers a belated statement of account from Barrie which is good reading :—

IN ACCOUNT WITH J. M. BARRIE.

	Why	*Cause of delay*	*Remarks*
A £1	Lent at Station	Object moving too fast	Doyle says he lent it
B £12	"Jane Annie" on Tour	Moving or swaying of Kodak	Better late than never
£30 6 4	Heaven knows	Failure to pull cord	Doyle gets 2/5 of a penny beyond his share

Our association was never so closely renewed, but through all my changing life I have had a respect and affection for Barrie which was, I hope, mutual. How I collaborated with him at cricket as well as at work is told in my chapter on Sport.

I NEVER met Robert Louis Stevenson in the flesh, though I owe so much to him in the literary spirit. Never can I forget the delight with which I read those early stories of his in the *Cornhill* before I knew the name of the author. I still think that " The Pavilion on the Links " is one of the great short stories of the world, though there were alterations in the final form which were all for the worse and showed prudery upon the part of the publishers. Stevenson's last year at Edinburgh University must have just about coincided with my first one, and Barrie must also have been in that grey old nest of learning about the year 1876. Strange to think that I probably brushed elbows with both of them in the crowded portal.

From his far-away home in Samoa he seemed to keep a quick eye upon literary matters in England, and I had most encouraging letters from him in 1893 and '94. " O frolic fellow-spookist " was his curious term of personal salutation in one of these, which showed that he shared my interest in psychic research but did not take it very seriously. I cannot guess how at that time

he had detected it in me, though I was aware that he had himself in early days acted as secretary to a Psychic Research or rather to a Spiritualist Society in Edinburgh, which studied the remarkable mediumship of Duguid. His letters to me consisted of kind appreciations of my work. "I have a great talent for compliment," he said, "accompanied by a hateful, even a diabolic, frankness." He had been retailing some of my Sherlock Holmes yarns to his native servants—I should not have thought that he needed to draw upon anyone else—and he complained to me in a comical letter of the difficulty of telling a story when you had to halt every moment to explain what a railway was, what an engineer was, and so forth. He "got the story across" in spite of all difficulties, and, said he, "if you could have seen the bright feverish eyes of Simite you would have tasted glory." But he explained that the natives took everything literally and that there was no such thing as an imaginary story for them. "I who write this have had the indiscretion to perpetuate a trifling piece of fiction, 'The Bottle Imp.' Parties who come up to visit my mansion, after having admired the ceiling by Vanderputty and the tapestry by Gobbling, manifest towards the end a certain uneasiness which proves them to be fellows of an infinite delicacy. They may be seen to shrug a brown shoulder, to roll up a speaking eye, and at last the secret bursts from them, 'Where is the bottle?'"

In another letter he said that as I had written of my first book in the *Idler* he also would do so. "I could not hold back where the white plume of Conan Doyle waved in front of me." So at least I may hope that it is to me that the world owes the little personal sketch about "Treasure Island" which appeared in that year. I cannot forget the shock that it was to me when, driving down the Strand in a hansom cab in 1894, I saw upon a yellow evening poster, "Death of R. L. Stevenson." Something seemed to have passed out of my world.

I was asked by his executors to finish the novel, "St. Ives," which he had left three-quarters completed, but I did not feel equal to the task. It was done, however, and, I understand, very well done, by Quiller-Couch. It is a desperately difficult thing to carry on another man's story, and must be a more or less mechanical effort.

I HAD one experience of carrying on another man's work when my neighbour at Hindhead, Grant Allen, was on his death-bed. He was much worried because there were two numbers of his serial, "Hilda Wade," which was running in THE STRAND MAGAZINE, still uncompleted. It was a pleasure for me to do them for him, and so relieve his mind, but it was difficult collar work, and I expect they were pretty bad. Some time afterwards a stranger, who evidently confused Allen and me, wrote to say that his wife had given him a baby girl, and that in honour of me he was calling her Hilda Wade. He was really nearer the truth than appeared at first sight.

I well remember that death-bed of Grant Allen's. He was an agnostic of a type which came very near atheism, though in his private life an amiable and benevolent man. Believing what he did, the approach of death must have offered rather a bleak prospect, and as he had paroxysms of extreme pain the poor fellow seemed very miserable. I had often argued the case with him, I from a theistic and he from a negative point of view, but I did not intrude my opinions or disturb his mind at that solemn moment. Death-bed changes, though some clergy may rejoice in them, are really vain things. His brain, however, was as clear as ever, and his mind was occupied with all manner of strange knowledge, which he imparted in the intervals of his pain, in the curious high nasal voice which was characteristic. I can see him now, his knees drawn up to ease internal pain, and his long, thin nose and reddish-grey goatee protruding over the sheet, while he croaked out: "Byzantine art, my dear Doyle, was of three periods, the middle one roughly coinciding with the actual fall of the Roman Empire. The characteristics of the first period——," and so on, until he would give a cry, clasp his hands across his stomach, and wait till the pain passed before resuming his lecture. His dear little wife nursed him devotedly, and mitigated the gloom of those moments which can be made soothed and happy if one understands what lies before one. One thinks as a contrast of Dr. Hodgson's impatient cry, "I can hardly wait for death!"

Grant Allen's strong opinions in print, and a certain pleasure he took in defending outside positions, gave quite a false view of his character, which was gentle and benignant. I remember his coming to a fancy-dress ball which we gave, in the character of a Cardinal, and in that guise all the quiet dignity of the man seemed to come out, and you realized how much our commonplace modern dress disguises the real man. He used to tell with great amusement how a couple, who afterwards became

"Oh, sir, Araminta has got a wasp!"

close friends, came first to call, and how as they waited on the doorstep the wife said to the husband, "Remember, John, if he openly blasphemes I leave the room." He had, I remember, very human relations with the maids, who took a keen interest in their employer's scientific experiments. On one occasion these were connected with spiders, and the maid rushed into the drawing-room and cried: "Oh, sir, Araminta has got a wasp!" Araminta was the name given to the big spider which he was observing at the time.

Grant Allen had no natural call to write fiction, but his brain was agile enough to make some sort of job of anything to which it turned. On the other hand, as a popular scientist he stood alone, or shared the honour only with Samuel Laing. His only real success in fiction was the excellent short story "John Creedy," where he combined science with fiction, with remarkable results.

At the time when I and so many others turned to letters there was certainly a wonderful vacancy for the new-comer. The giants of old had all departed. Thackeray, Dickens, Charles Reade, and Trollope were memories. There was no great figure remaining. Mrs. Humphry Ward was just beginning her career with "Robert Elsmere," the first of that series of novels which will illuminate the later Victorian era more clearly than any historian ever can do. I think it was Hodgkins who said, when he read "Count Robert of Paris": "Here have I been studying Byzantium all my life, and I never understood it until this blessed Scotch lawyer made it clear to me." That is the special prerogative of imagination. Trollope and Mrs. Ward have the whole Victorian civilization dissected and preserved.

Then there was Meredith, unintelligible to most, and Walter Besant, with the big, unselfish soul, who took more interest in the well-being of his own profession than anyone before or since. There was Wilkie Collins, too, with his fine stories of mystery, and finally there was James Payn.

PAYN was much greater than his books. The latter were usually rather mechanical, but to get at the real man one has to read such essays as his "Literary Reminiscences," and especially "The Backwater of Life." He had all that humorous view which Nature seems to give as a compensation to those whose strength is weak. Had Payn written only essays he would have rivalled Charles Lamb. I knew him best in his latter days, when he was crippled with illness, and his poor fingers so twisted with rheumatic arthritis that they seemed hardly human. He was intensely pessimistic as to his own fate. "Don't make any mistake, Doyle, death is a horrible thing—horrible! I suffer the agonies of the damned!" But five minutes later he would have his audience roaring with laughter, and his own high treble laugh would be the loudest of all.

His own ailments were frequently a source of mirth. I remember how he described the breaking of a blood-vessel while he was staying in Bournemouth, and how they carried him home in a litter. He was dimly conscious of the fir woods through which he passed. "I thought it was my funeral, and that they had done me well in the matter of plumes." When he told a story he was so carried away by his sense of humour that he could hardly get the end out, and he finished up in a kind of scream. An American had called upon him at some late hour and had discoursed upon Assyrian tablets. "I thought they were something to eat," he screamed.

He was an excellent whist player, and the Baldwin Club used to send three members to his house on certain days so that the old fellow should not go without his game. That game was very scientific. He would tell with delight how he asked some novice, "Do you play the penultimate?" To which the novice answered, "No, but my brother plays the American organ."

Many of my generation of authors had reason to love him, for he was a human and kindly critic. His handwriting, however, was really dreadful. It was of him that the story was told that an author handed one of his letters to a chemist for a test. The chemist retired for a time and then returned with a bottle and demanded half a crown. Better luck attended the man who received an illegible letter from a railway director. He used it as a free pass upon the line. Payn used to joke about his own writing, but it was a very real trouble when one could not make out whether he had accepted or rejected one's story. There was one letter in which I could only read the words "infringement of copyright." He was very funny when he described the work of the robust younger school. "I have received a story from ——," he said, "five thousand words, mostly damns."

I KNEW Sir Henry Thompson, the famous surgeon, very well, and was frequently honoured by an invitation to his octave dinners, at which eight carefully-chosen male guests were the company. They always seemed to me to be the most wonderful exhibitions of unselfishness, for Thompson was not allowed any alcohol, or anything save the most simple viands. Possibly, however, like Meredith and the bottle of Burgundy, he enjoyed some reflex pleasure from the enjoyment of others. He had been a wonderful *viveur* and judge of what was what, and I fear that I disappointed him, for I was much more interested in the conversation than the food, and it used to annoy me when some argument was interrupted in order to tell us that it was not ordinary ham but a Westphalian wild boar that we were eating, and that it had been boiled in wine for precisely the right time prescribed by the best authorities. But it was part of his wonderful unselfish hospitality to make his guests realize exactly what it was that was set before them. I have never heard more interesting talk than at these male gatherings, for it is notorious that, though ladies greatly improve the appearance of a feast, they invariably detract from the quality of the talk. Few men are ever absolutely natural when there are women in the room.

There was one special dinner—I fancy it was the hundredth of the series—which was particularly interesting, as the Prince of Wales, now George the Fifth, was one of the eight, and gave us a most interesting account of the voyage round the world from which he had just returned. Of the rest of the company I can only recall Sir Henry Stanley, the traveller, and Sir Crichton Browne. Twenty years later I met the King when he visited a trade exhibition, and I attended as one of the directors of Tuck's famous postcard firm. He at once said, "Why, I have not seen you since that pleasant dinner when you sat next to me at Sir Henry Thompson's." It seemed to me to be a remarkable example of the Royal gift of memory.

I have not often occupied a chair among the seats of the mighty. My life has been too busy and too preoccupied to allow me to stray far from my beaten path. The

mention of the Prince, however, reminds me of the one occasion when I was privileged to entertain—or to attempt to entertain—the present Queen. It was at a small dinner to which I was invited by the courtesy of Lord Midleton, whose charming wife, once Madeleine Stanley, daughter of Lady St. Helier, I could remember since her girlhood. Upon this occasion the Prince and Princess came in after dinner, the latter sitting alone at one end of the room with a second chair beside her own, which was occupied successively by the various gentlemen who were to be introduced to her. I was led up in due course, made my bow, and sat down at her request. I confess that I found it heavy going at first, for I had heard somewhere that Royalty has to make the first remark, and had it been the other way there was such a gulf between us that I should not have known where to begin. However, she was very pleasant and gracious, and began asking me some questions about my works which brought me on to very easy ground. Indeed, I became so interested in our talk that I was quite disappointed when Mr. John Morley was led up and I realized that it was time for me to vacate the chair.

There was another amusing incident upon that eventful evening. I had been asked to take in Lady Curzon, whose husband, then Viceroy of India, had been unable to attend. The first couple had passed in, and there was a moment's hesitation as to who should go next, but Lady Curzon and I were nearest the door, so, possibly with some little encouragement from the lady,

Mr. John Morley was led up and I realized that it was time for me to vacate the chair.

we filed through. I thought nothing of the incident, but some authority upon these matters came to me afterwards in great excitement. "Do you know," he said, "that you have established a precedent and solved one of the most difficult and debatable matters of etiquette that have ever caused ill-feeling in British Society?" "Indeed!" said I, trying to look wise. "The Lord Chancellor and the College of Heralds should be much obliged to you, for you have given them a definite lead. There has never been so vexed a question as whether a Vicereine, when she is away from the country where she represents Royalty, shall take precedence over a duchess. There was a duchess in the room, but you, by your decided action, have settled the matter for ever." So who shall say that I have done nothing in my life?

CHAPTER XV.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF SPORT.*

As one grows old one looks back at one's career in sport as a thing completed. Yet I have at least held on to it as long as I could, for I played a hard match of Association football at forty-four, and I played cricket for ten years more. But if I have never specialized, and have, therefore, been a second-rater in all things, I have made up for it by being an all-rounder, and have had, I dare say, as much fun out of sport as many an adept. It would be odd if a man could try as many games as I for so many years without having some interesting experiences or forming a few opinions which would bear recording and discussion.

And, first of all, let me "damn the sins I have no mind to" by recording what most of my friends will regard as limitations. I never could look upon flat-racing as a true sport. Sport is what a man does, not what a horse does. Skill and judgment are shown, no doubt, by the professional jockeys, but I think it may be argued that in nine cases out of ten the best horse wins, and would have equally won, could his head be kept straight, had there been a dummy on his back. But making every allowance on the one side for what human qualities may be called forth, and for any improvement of the breed of horses (though I am told that the same pains in other directions would produce infinitely more fruitful and generally useful results), and putting on the other side the demoralization from betting, the rascality among some bookmakers, and the collection of undesirable characters brought together by a race-meeting, I cannot avoid the conclusion that the harm greatly outweighs the good from a broadly national point of view, Yet I recognize, of course, that it is an amusement which lies so deeply in human nature—the oldest, perhaps, of all amusements which have come down to us—that it must have its place in our system until the time may come when it will be gradually modified, developing, perhaps, some purifying change, as prize-fighting did when it turned to contests with the gloves.

I have purposely said "flat-racing" because I think a stronger case, though not, perhaps, an entirely sound one, could be made out for steeplechasing. Eliminate the mob and the money, and then, surely, among feats of human skill and hardihood there are not many to match that of the winner of a really stiff point-to-point, while the man who rides at the huge barriers of the Grand National has a heart for anything. As in the old days of the ring, it is not the men or the sport, but it is the followers who cast a shadow on the business. Go down to Waterloo and meet any returning race train, if you doubt it.

If I have alienated half my readers by my critical attitude to the Turf, I shall probably offend the other half by stating that I cannot persuade myself that we are justified in taking life as a pleasure. To shoot for the pot must be right, since man must feed, and to kill creatures which live upon others (the hunting of foxes, for example) must also be right, since to slay one is to save many; but the rearing of birds in order to kill them, and the shooting of such sensitive and inoffensive animals as hares and deer, cannot, I think, be justified.

I must admit that I had shot a good deal before I came to this conclusion. Perhaps the fact, while it prevents my assuming any airs of virtue, will give my opinion greater weight, since good shooting is still within my reach, and I know nothing more exhilarating than to wait on the borders of an autumn-tinted wood, to hear the crackling advance of beaters, to mark the sudden whir and the yell of "Mark over," and then, over the topmost branches, to see a noble cock pheasant whizzing down wind at a pace which pitches him a hundred yards behind you when you have dropped him. But

* *Portions of this chapter appeared in* The Strand Magazine *many years ago, but are here reprinted in order to preserve the continuity of the narrative.*

when your moment of exultation is over, and you note what a beautiful creature he is and how one instant of your pleasure has wrecked him, you feel that you had better think no longer if you mean to slip two more cartridges into your gun and stand by for another. Worse still is it when you hear the child-like wail of the wounded hare. I should think that there are few sportsmen who have not felt a disgust at their own handiwork when they have heard it. So, too, when you see the pheasant fly on with his legs showing beneath him as sign that he is hard hit. He drops into the thick woods and is lost to sight. Perhaps it is as well for your peace of mind that he should be lost to thought also.

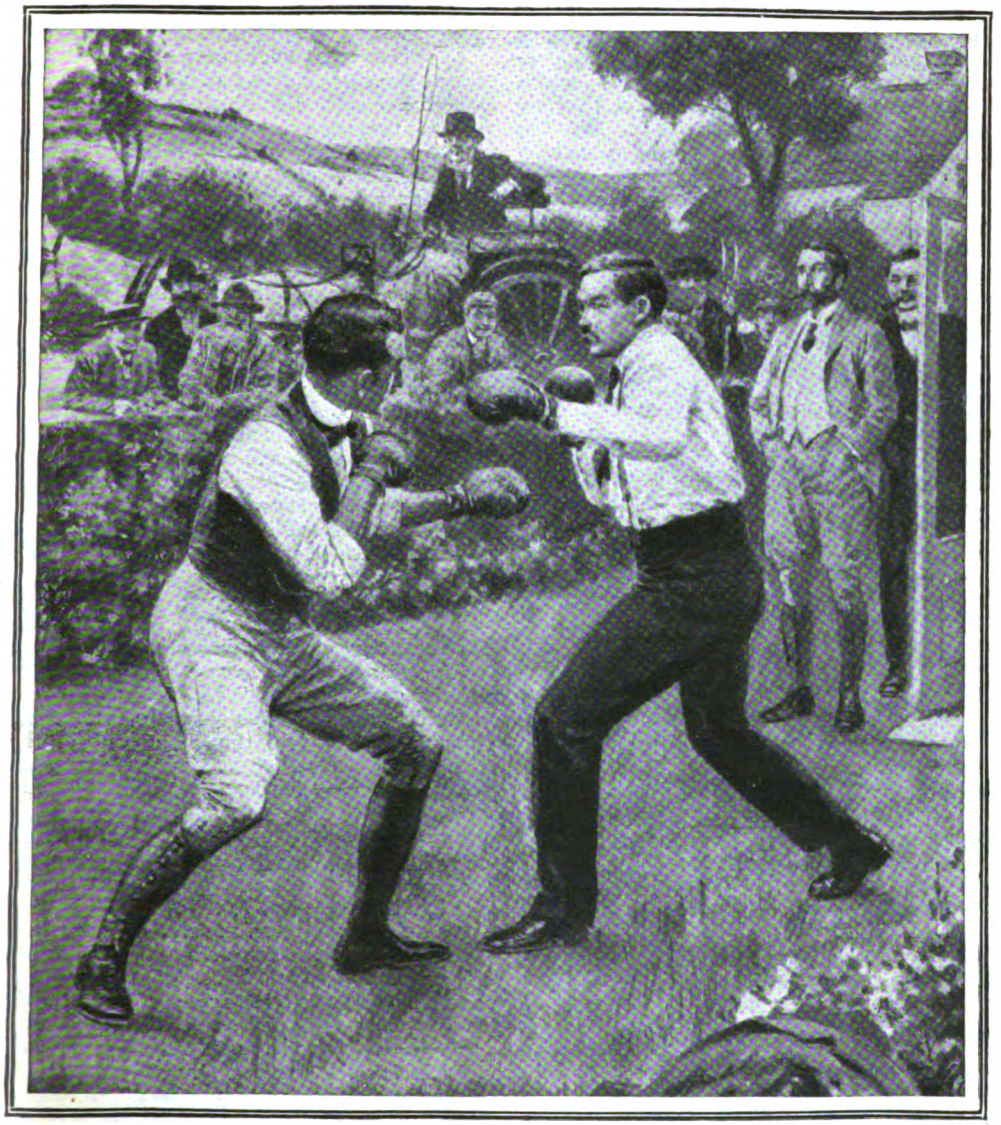
Of course, one is met always by the perfectly valid argument that the creatures would not live at all if it were not for the purposes of sport, and that it is presumably better from their point of view that they should eventually meet a violent death than that they should never have existed. No doubt this is true. But there is another side of the question, as to the effect of the sport upon ourselves—whether it does not blunt our own better feelings, harden our sympathies, brutalize our natures. A coward can do it as well as a brave man; a weakling can do it as well as a strong man. There is no ultimate good from it. Have we a moral right, then, to kill creatures for amusement? I know many of the best and most kind-hearted men who do it, but still I feel that in a more advanced age it will no longer be possible.

AND yet I am aware of my own inconsistency when I say I am in sympathy with fishing, and would gladly have a little if I knew where to get it. And yet, is it wholly inconsistent? Is a cold-blooded creature of low organization like a fish to be regarded in the same way as the hare which cries out in front of the beagles, or the deer which may carry the rifle bullet away in its side? If there is any cruelty it is surely of a much less degree. Besides, is it not the sweet solitude of Nature, the romantic quest, rather than the actual capture, which appeals to the fisherman? One thinks of the stories of trout and salmon which have taken another fly within a few minutes of having broken away from a former one, and one feels that their sense of pain must be very different from our own.

I once had the best of an exchange of fishing stories, which does not sound like a testimonial to my veracity. It was in a Birmingham inn, and a commercial traveller was boasting of his successes. I ventured to back the weight of the last three fish which I had been concerned in catching against any day's take of his lifetime. He closed with the bet and quoted some large haul, a hundred pounds or more. "Now, sir," he asked, triumphantly, "what was the weight of your three fish?" "Just over two hundred tons," I answered. "Whales?" "Yes, three Greenland whales." "I give you best," he cried; but whether as a fisherman or as a teller of fish stories I am not sure. As a matter of fact, I had only returned that year from the Arctic Seas, and the three fish in question were, in truth, the last which I had helped to catch.

I HAVE always been keen upon the noble old English sport of boxing, and, though of no particular class myself, I suppose I might describe my form as that of a fair average amateur. I should have been a better man had I taught less and learned more, but after my first tuition I had few chances of professional teaching. However, I have done a good deal of mixed boxing among many different types of men, and had as much pleasure from it as from any form of sport. It stood me in good stead aboard the whaler. Upon the very first evening I had a strenuous bout with the steward, who was an excellent sportsman. I heard him afterwards, through the partition of the cabin, declare that I was "the best sur-r-r-geon we've had, Colin—he's blacked my ee." It struck me as a singular test of my medical ability, but I dare say it did no harm.

I remember when I was a medical practitioner going down to examine a man's life for insurance in a little Sussex village. He was the gentleman farmer of the place, and a most sporting and jovial soul. It was a Saturday, and I enjoyed his hospitality that evening, staying over till Monday. After breakfast it chanced that several neighbours dropped in, one of whom, an athletic young farmer, was fond of the gloves. Conversation soon brought out the fact that I had a weakness in the same direction. The result was obvious. Two pairs of gloves were hunted from some cupboard, and in a few minutes we were hard at it, playing light at first and letting out as we warmed. It was soon clear that there was no room inside a house for two heavy-weights, so we adjourned to the front lawn. The main road ran across the end of it, with a low wall of just the right height to allow the village to rest its elbows on it and enjoy the spectacle. We fought several very brisk rounds, with no particular advantage either way, but the contest always stands out in my memory for its queer surroundings and the old English picture in which it was set. It is one of several curious by-battles in my career.



It was soon clear that there was no room inside a house for two heavy-weights, so we adjourned to the front lawn.

I recollect another curious encounter when I and another, returning from a ball in the first light of a summer morning, got talking upon the subject. Our talk ended by my going into his rooms, where we put on the gloves, and in our dress clothes, minus the coats, fought, without spectators, several rather murderous rounds.

They say that every form of knowledge comes useful sooner or later. Certainly my own experience in boxing and my very large acquaintance with the history of the prize-ring found their scope when I wrote "Rodney Stone." No one but a fighting man would ever, I think, quite understand or appreciate some of the detail. A friend of mine read the scene where Boy Jim fights Berks to a prize-fighter as he lay in what proved to be his last illness. The man listened with growing animation until the reader came to the point where the second advises Boy Jim, in technical jargon, how to get at his awkward antagonist. "That's it! By God, he's got him!" shouted the man in the bed. It was an incident which gave me pleasure when I heard it.

I have never concealed my opinion that the old prize-ring was an excellent thing from a national point of view— exactly as glove-fighting is now. Better that our sports should be a little too rough than that we should run a risk of effeminacy. But the ring outlasted its time. It was ruined by the villainous mobs who cared nothing for the chivalry of sport or the traditions of British fair play as compared to the money gain which the contest might bring. Their blackguardism drove out the good men—the men who really did uphold the ancient standards, and so the whole institution passed into rottenness and decay. But now the glove contests carried on under the discipline of the National Sporting or other clubs perpetuate the noble old sport without a possibility of the more evil elements creeping into it once more. To have an exhibition of hardihood without brutality, of good-humoured courage without savagery, of skill without trickery, is, I think, the very highest which sport can give. People may smile at the gloves, but a twenty-round contest with four-ounce gloves is quite as punishing an ordeal as one could wish to endure. There is as little room for a coward as in the rougher days of old, and the standard of endurance is probably as high as in the average prize-fight.

One wonders how our champions of to-day would have fared at the hands of the heroes of the past. I know something of this end of the question, for I have seen nearly all the great boxers of my time, from J. L. Sullivan down to Tommy Burns, Carpentier, Bombardier Wells, Beckett, and that little miracle Jimmy Wilde. But how about the other end—the men of old? Wonderful Jem Mace was the only link between them. On the one hand, he was supreme in the 'sixties as a knuckle-fighter; on the other, he gave the great impetus to glove-fighting in America, and more especially in Australia, which has brought over such champions as Frank Slavin and Fitzsimmons, who, through Mace's teaching, derive straight from the classic line of British boxers. He of all men might have drawn a just comparison between the old and the new. But even his skill and experience might be at fault, for it is notorious that many of the greatest fighters under the old *régime* were poor hands with the gloves. Men could bang poor Tom Sayers all round the ring with the gloves who would not have dared to get over the ropes had he been without them. I have seen Mace box, and even when over sixty it was wonderful how straight was his left, how quick his feet, and how impregnable his guard.

AFTER the Great War, one can see that those of us who worked for the revival of boxing wrought better than we knew, for at the supreme test of all time, the test which has settled the history of the future, it has played a marked part. I do not mean that a man used his fists in the war, but I mean—and every experienced instructor will, I am sure, endorse it—that the combative spirit and aggressive quickness gave us the attacking fire and helped especially in bayonet work. But it was to our allies of France that the chief advantage came. I believe that Carpentier the boxer did more to win the war for France than any other man save the actual generals or politicians. The public proof that a Frenchman could be at the very head of his class, as Ledoux was also at a lighter weight, gives a physical self-respect to a nation which tinges the spirit of every single member of it. It was a great day for the French when English sports—boxing, Rugby football, and others—came across to them, and when a young man's ideal ceased to be amatory adventure, with an occasional duel. England has taught Europe much, but nothing of more value than this.

To return to my own small experiences of the game, I might have had one very notable one, for I was asked to referee the great contest when the champions of the white and black races fought for what may prove to be the last time. My first intimation was a cable, followed by this letter :—

New York, December 9, 1909.

My dear Sir,—

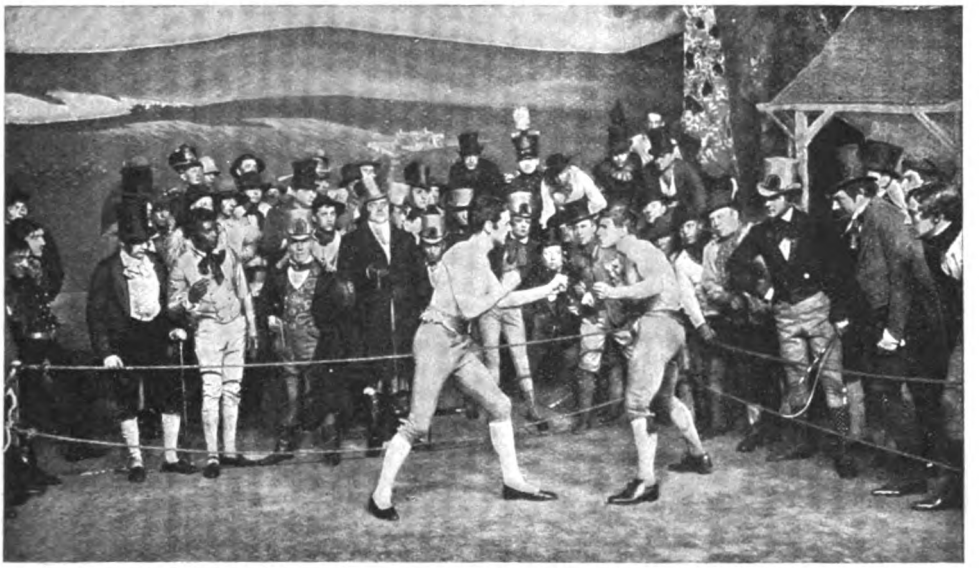
I hope you will pardon the liberty I took as a stranger in cabling to you asking if you would act at the championship battle between Jeffries and Johnson. The fact is that when the articles were signed recently your name was suggested for referee, and Tex Rickard, promoter of the fight, was greatly interested, as were many others. I believe it will interest you to know that the opinion was unanimous that you would do admirably in the position. In a voting contest several persons sent in your name as their choice. Believe me, among sporting men of the best class in America you have many strong admirers; your splendid stories of the ring and your avowed admiration for the great sport of boxing have made you thousands of friends.

It was because of this extremely friendly feeling for you in America that I took the liberty of cabling to you. I thank you for your reply.

It would indeed rejoice the hearts of the men in this country if you were at the ringside when the great negro fighter meets the white

man Jeffries for the world's championship.
I am, my dear Sir,
Yours sincerely,
IRVING JEFFERSON LEWIS.
Managing Editor,
"New York Morning Telegraph."

I was much inclined to accept this honourable invitation, though my friends pictured me as winding up with a revolver at one ear and a razor at the other. However, the distance and my engagements presented a final bar.



The fight at Crawley Down—a scene from the dramatic version of "Rodney Stone."

IF boxing is the finest single-man sport, I think that Rugby football is the best collective one. Strength, courage, speed, and resource are great qualities to include in a single game. I have always wished that it had come more my way in life, but my football was ruined, as many a man's is, by the fact that at my old school they played a hybrid game peculiar to the place, with excellent points of its own, but unfitting the youngster for any other. All these local freak games, wall games, Winchester games, and so on, are national misfortunes; for while our youths are wasting their energies upon them—those precious early energies which make the instinctive players—the young South African or New Zealander is brought up on the real universal Rugby, and so comes over to pluck a few more laurel leaves out of our depleted wreath. In Australia they have, in Victoria, a hybrid, though excellent, game of their own; but they have had the sense, in other parts, to fall into line, and are already taking the same high position which they hold in other branches of sport. I hope that our public schools will follow the same course.

In spite of my wretched training, I played for a time as a forward in the Edinburgh University team, but my want of knowledge of the game was too heavy a handicap. Afterwards I took to Association, and played first goal and then back for Portsmouth when that famous club was an amateur organization. Even then we could put a very fair team in the field, and were runners-up for the County Cup the last season that I played. In the same season I was invited to play for the county. I was always too slow, however, to be a really good back, though I was a long and safe kick. After a long hiatus I took up football again, in South Africa, and organized a series of inter-hospital matches in Bloemfontein which helped to take our minds away from enteric. My old love treated me very scurvily, however, for I received a foul from a man's knee which buckled two of my ribs and brought my games to a close. I have played occasionally since, but there is no doubt that as a man grows older a brisk charge shakes him up as it never did before. Let him turn to golf, and be thankful that there is still one outdoor game which can never desert him. There may be objections to the "ancient and royal," but a game which takes four miles of country for the playing must always have a majesty of its own.

(To be continued.)

Photographs by Elliott & Fry, G. C. Beresford, Foulsham & Banfield, and London Stereoscopic.

"Seriously, my dear, I can't come! You know quite well I would if I could."

THE PHILANDERER

by

MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

I.

THE stable-yard clock struck seven. Leonard Hardwyke, a fine, upstanding man, looking a good deal younger than his age, which was forty-one, jumped up from his chair. Time he went to see the lady whom he facetiously called his missus.

It was Christmas Eve, and to many a cheery house-party gathered together within a motor drive of Allways Place he would have been a welcome addition, had it not been that, according to his rather peculiar moral code, it was not fitting for him to be away from his own quiet, shadowed house on either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Other people might forget what Hardwyke owed to his wife, but he never forgot. At the time of their marriage he had been nearly penniless, and now he was for all practical purposes master of a large fortune.

As he was walking to the door of his pleasant study the telephone bell rang. He turned, took up the receiver, listened for a moment, then called back in a hearty, jovial tone, "Don't tempt me, Cissie! A good man—and I hope I'm a good man—does not leave his wife alone on Christmas Eve!"

Copyright, 1924, by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes.

A slightly pettish voice answered: "What nonsense! You never see her after half-past eight—you told me so yourself, in the days when I used to feel so sorry for you."

Though he knew she couldn't see him he shook his head. "Seriously, my dear, I can't come. You know quite well I would if I could——" There was a tender vibration in his low, caressing voice. Even after he had wearied of a woman Hardwyke always went on being affectionate and courteous; so "Happy Christmas, darling," he murmured.

He heard her say angrily: "I won't wish *you* a happy Christmas, Leonard. You don't deserve one! You *are* a hypocrite! Going to spend a pleasant evening with Miss Akbar, I suppose?"

Before he could deny, with real vehemence, that unfair impeachment, Mrs. Langdon hung up the receiver.

Though vexed, he felt a little touched, too. Rather nice of her to be so disappointed, considering what old friends they were, and how long it was since—well, since he had made love to her.

Still, the word hypocrite stung him. Far from being a hypocrite Hardwyke never even pretended to other women than herself that he had more than a grateful affection for his wife. What more could one ask from a man who had married, at twenty-nine, a woman who was forty-three, plain and sickly, and not over good-tempered? It hadn't always been easy, begad! But he had got his way with it, and he was happier now than he had been at the beginning of his married life. In those early days, when his Annie used to be ridiculously jealous, had been awkward, and sometimes very tiresome. But by dint of good humour, of showing her the little attentions that all women love, and also by—well, by being exceedingly careful, he had lulled her jealousy to sleep, and he was now far happier than many married men of his acquaintance. Life had become infinitely easier, too, since Annie had subsided into being a regular invalid, living entirely upstairs in her own charming suite of rooms. Oddly enough she hated doctors, and that, from Hardwyke's point of view, was a good thing. It would have been such a bore if the house had always been full of medicos.

His mind took a sudden twist. He didn't envy the fellow who married Rosalind Akbar. There was a regular little spitfire for you!

And then, as if his thought had brought her, the door opened and Miss Akbar, his wife's companion, came through it, her ardent glance enveloping him as in a blast of flame.

For a moment he felt queerly disconcerted, almost as though he had been caught out doing something he should not do. And yet that was far from being the case. On the contrary, with regard to this young woman he had acted with unusual good sense. Your born philanderer—and Hardwyke was a born philanderer—is very rarely tempted to assume the *rôle* of a Don Juan, and, when he is so tempted, that instinct of self-preservation, which is the strongest instinct of all, comes to his aid—and turns him from a Don Juan into a Joseph.

"You *are* a hypocrite! Going to spend a pleasant evening with Miss Akbar, I suppose?"

It was a long time—indeed, not since early October—since Miss Akbar had sought him out like this, in his own quarters.

"Mrs. Hardwyke is not well to-night," she said, quietly. "I'm afraid she will not be able to see you this evening."

"Then you think it unlikely that she will ask for me to-night?"

"I feel sure she will not do so."

There was a pause, and then, "May I go now?" she asked, with affected humility.

He opened the door for her. "Certainly, Miss Akbar, and thank you for coming yourself."

He shut the door slowly, then went over to the telephone. "16, Paringham, please—Cissie? What luck to catch you like this! My wife's not well, and I've just had a

message to say she doesn't wish to be disturbed to-night, so I'll come along, if I may, as soon as I've had dinner."

He heard the slightly mocking words. "Good business! No, I don't mean that, of course—I'm sorry Mrs. Hardwyke isn't well. But I'm glad you're coming, Len. I hope Miss Akbar won't be disappointed!"

He went to the fireplace and sat down, wondering, with a touch of uneasiness, how much local gossip lay behind that acrid remark. He and the girl certainly gave no cause for gossip *now*—for his wife's companion lived a life quite apart from his own. She had her own sitting-room, where she even took her meals, and though there had been a time when he had chafed at a state of things which had made it almost impossible for him to see much of Rosalind Akbar without the whole household becoming aware of the fact, he was now very glad indeed that it was difficult for them to meet.

Yet how attractive she was! No wonder he had been so strangely and powerfully allured. To-night she was wearing a dull gold frock on which, stencilled here and there, were blue and green Chinese peacocks —emblems of bad luck. The sheaf-like garment showed every point of her beautiful, slender figure, and from the small opening of the neck rose the proud-looking little, narrow head, crowned with an aureole of dark, curling hair.

Then his mind reverted to the evening's amusement before him. He was touched and flattered at the genuine pleasure in Cissie Langdon's voice.

There is something very pleasant to the average man in the knowledge that he is thoroughly well liked by a large circle of neighbours. True, when one is generous and rich, one is very apt to be liked by the people among whom one's lot is cast. But Leonard Hardwyke was well aware that he had had to live down strong prejudice. Everyone in this old-fashioned country neighbourhood had fallen into the habit of thinking that Anne Allways was destined to remain for ever unmarried. That the wealthy, ill-tempered spinster lady, a suspicious-natured invalid to boot, should suddenly return from Brighton one spring with a good-looking husband fourteen years younger than herself had been a nine days' wonder, and certain people had looked very askant, and for a long time, at Leonard Hardwyke.

Now the trouble was not that people disliked him, but that they liked him a thought too much!

Over the shrewd, good-looking face there came a slight smile. The unkind might have called it a fatuous smile—for it was the smile of a man who knows, deep in his heart, that he is almost uncannily attractive to women.

And then he grew suddenly grave, for he had remembered once more Rosalind Akbar. It gave him a touch of discomfort to know that she was close by, on the other side of the house, probably thinking of him with mingled malignity and—well, why not call it "passion" to himself?

She had once talked wildly of killing herself, and it had frightened him badly.

II.

THE fun at Paringham Hall was at its height, though some of the older people were beginning to think of the supper which was to be served immediately the children had been sent off to bed.

Because of the children all sorts of childish games had been played to-night, and now they had come to "Blind Man's Buff." Leonard Hardwyke was the only man over forty in the game, but, as he was in the pink of physical condition, he had enjoyed every minute of it. And the pleasantest minute of all had been that when he had caught the prettiest girl in the room, and, with her willing assent, refused for a whole half-minute to let her go!

They had all sat down to rest for a few moments when the door of the ballroom opened, and there appeared two smiling white-clad nurses. Behind them stood Glencomb, an old family servant who was on terms of respectful friendship with his master's most popular guest. As he had come into the house this evening Leonard Hardwyke had slipped a pound note into Glencomb's hand. "A happy Christmas!" he had exclaimed, and the man had looked at him full of gratified surprise; Mr. Hardwyke had indeed deserved his luck in being married to so rich a lady.

But while the nurses were calling to their unwilling charges to come to bed, there came a look of genuine distress on the butler's face. He threaded his way quietly among the chairs till he reached the place where Hardwyke was leaning over a fair lady murmuring, as was his way, pleasant somethings in her ear; and then, "Mr. Hardwyke," he whispered, "you are wanted on the telephone."

Hardwyke straightened himself. "All right, Glencomb, I'm coming!"

But though his face remained unruffled and smiling, he felt really angry. At one time his wife's companion had fallen into the way of telephoning to him when he was lunching or dining out, and she would take any excuse, however trivial, or at any rate so it had seemed to him. He had told her at last never to telephone unless the

matter was really urgent, and of late she had obeyed him.

As they were crossing the hall Glencomb said, quietly: "I'm afraid, sir, that you're going to hear bad news."

Hardwyke felt startled—nay, more, frightened.

Good God! how awful it would be for him if that foolish girl had done anything terrible, irreparable! He had an inconveniently vivid imagination, and now he saw Rosalind Akbar stretched out on the floor of her sitting-room—the small automatic pistol which he had once seen in her possession lying by her side. . . .

The telephone was in a tiny room leading to the domestic quarters of Paringham Hall, and after the butler had shut the door on him, Hardwyke, taking up the receiver, called out: "What's the matter?"

Silence—disconcerting silence.

He waited impatiently. And then, just as he was going to try and get through again, he heard the question uttered in a woman's voice, "Is that Mr. Hardwyke himself?"

His heart stood still, for it was not Rosalind Akbar's voice. "Yes, yes—of course it is! Who are you?"

"I'm Miss Dakin, the parish nurse, Mr. Hardwyke. I'm afraid I'm going to give you a great shock. Mrs. Hardwyke is dead."

He was so amazed, so astounded, that the meaning of the words just uttered in that quiet, toneless voice did not carry their full significance to his brain.

He said in a dazed voice: "My wife—dead?"

"She was already dead when I was sent for. It must have been very sudden."

"Is Dr. Fenner there?"

"He is out at a bad case, and they don't expect him back for another hour."

"I see. Thank you. I'll come home at once, of course." As he went out of the room it was a comfort to see the butler waiting for him at the end of the passage.

"You were right, Glencomb. I've had very bad news. Mrs. Hardwyke has died suddenly. I must go home at once. Will you tell Mrs. Langdon?"

"I feared it was something very serious, sir, from the way the lady spoke. I've sent round for your car, and meanwhile I do hope you'll just have a little supper—I've got it all ready on a tray for you."

There came a lump in Hardwyke's throat. What a good fellow Glencomb was! What good friends he had in every class of life! He put out his hand and clasped the other man's, warmly.

And then, standing there in the stone passage, he began to eat the cold chicken and pâté-de-foie-gras mousse. But though a few minutes ago he had felt quite hungry, he ate very little now. Still, he did manage to put away the whole of the half bottle of excellent champagne Glencomb had also thoughtfully provided.

Poor Annie—poor, dear Annie! Well, he had made her as happy as any man could have made her. She had told him so, albeit a little grudgingly, on the occasion of his last birthday, when she had given him a big cheque to buy a new hunter. He remembered, too, that she had re-made her will this autumn, in deference to a suggestion of his. Several of the people to whom she had left money in her last will, made at the time of their marriage, had died.

IN the daylight it took not much more than a quarter of an hour to reach Allways Place, but the chauffeur was agreeably aware that he had to deal with a master who never cared to take risks. Besides, where was the use of hurrying now? So Hardwyke had a little time for thought as he sat back in his luxurious car.

He told himself, as men are apt to tell themselves at such moments, that it's the unexpected which always happens in life. Why, the last time the great London specialist, who was the only doctor she liked, had seen his wife, he had said that he saw no reason why she shouldn't live till eighty! Hardwyke had always supposed that he would outlive her, a reasonable belief, as she was fourteen years older than himself, and during the first three or four years of their married life he had sometimes thought of what would happen when she died. But that kind of secret speculation had now been absent from his mind for a long time.

Yet how this unexpected event would alter his life! How it would free him from a kind of bondage he had never allowed to weigh on him, but which he had felt to be there—good God, yes!—all the time. Although they would both have denied it, it was, of course, a fact that he had never been free to go away, to do anything that he really wanted to do, without her permission. Poor Annie hadn't asked much of her husband, but he had almost always to be with her while she ate her lunch, when she drank her afternoon tea and during her plain little supper.

He had grown very fond of Allways Place, the charming Elizabethan manor-house of which he had become master in so curious and romantic a way—Hardwyke always liked to think of his marriage as curious and romantic—but, even so, how glad he would be to get away from it for a while!

He suddenly remembered, with a feeling of real gratitude and emotion, that with

regard to that recent will of hers his wife had made one very important alteration. In her first will she had put in a clause common enough in men's wills, but uncommon in a woman's will. This was that in the case of his re-marriage he should only have a thousand a year. But she had cut out that clause, leaving him absolutely free, and sole owner of her considerable fortune. He thought with emotion that she needn't have altered that clause. Marry again? Not he! To Leonard Hardwyke's mind a rich bachelor's life was the ideal life.

III.

HE had thought Miss Akbar would meet him at the front door, and he was relieved to see no one there but his wife's old, old butler, a man whom it had taken him a long time to win round, but with whom he was now on the very best of terms. Why, there were actually tears in the old fellow's eyes. How touching!

"The parish nurse has stayed on, sir," said the man in a quavering voice. "She thought you might like to see her; she's in the study."

Hardwyke felt glad that no word was said as to Miss Akbar. He suspected that there had been, among the servants, just a leetle talk this last summer concerning his friendship with his wife's companion. That sort of person is so apt to suspect evil where no evil exists. Still, it was a relief to know that Rosalind Akbar would, of course, leave Allways Place immediately after the funeral.

He hurried off to his study, and the parish nurse stood up as he came in. Like everyone else in the village, she was on the best of terms with him.

As he shook hands with her he murmured: "This is terribly sudden, Miss Dakin. Somehow I can't believe it even now! I was with Mrs. Hardwyke while she had her tea this afternoon, and I thought her rather better than usual."

"Miss Akbar says that Mrs. Hardwyke began to feel ill about half-past six, and that from then she grew worse and worse. I'm sorry, Mr. Hardwyke, that I wasn't sent for before. I might have done something to alleviate her pain."

"Had she pain?" he said, startled and very sorry.

"Yes, I'm afraid she had a good deal of pain. But Miss Akbar gave her some morphia pills which Mrs. Hardwyke had had by her for a long time."

He said, bewildered: "But I don't understand *why* she died."

"Her heart must have given way."

He caught at that. "The big London man we had down some time ago told me her heart was not in good trim."

There was a pause, and then Hardwyke said, solicitously: "I do hope you've had some supper, Miss Dakin?"

It was that sort of thoughtfulness that made people like the man so much. He was kind to any woman that came across his path.

She said, gratefully: "Yes, indeed, I've had some supper, Mr. Hardwyke—and a glass of your wonderful old port as well."

"That's right!" he exclaimed. "Have another glass now, before you go out into the cold?" And though she protested, he rang the bell. "I'm glad old England hasn't gone dry yet, eh?"

The parish nurse smiled, for the first time that evening.

After he had ordered the wine from the butler, he turned to her again. "I suppose poor Miss Akbar is worn out; and that you sent her to bed?"

She looked rather surprised. "No, I don't think she's gone to bed, Mr. Hardwyke. I'm sure she meant to sit up to see you. She was in here just now, but when we heard the motor she left the room. I wonder where she can be?"

And then he realized that the strange girl didn't mean to see him for the first time after his wife's death in the presence of another woman. But if she thought he was going to choose such a moment as this to be sentimental she was mistaken; the idea was revolting—revolting!

He poured out a glass of port for the nurse, and then he took her to the front door and put her into his motor as carefully, as courteously, so she said to herself, as if she had been the first lady in the land.

Slowly, with lagging steps, he turned back into the house. "If Miss Akbar has not gone to bed, I should like to see her," he said to the butler; and then, as if by an afterthought: "Oh, and at the same time Miss Brown might come down."

Brown was his wife's maid, and his firm ally.

"Miss Brown has gone to bed, sir. Miss Akbar is already in the study—I saw her go in there just now."

Then he had been right? She had been waiting for the other woman to go before she saw him.

Straightening himself instinctively, he opened the door of the study.

His wife's companion was standing by the fire, and her head was bent down, as if she were listening to something. She did not look up as he opened the door, and a sensation of irritation swept over Leonard Hardwyke. Why couldn't she be ordinary, natural? Alas, he knew well enough that

she was being absolutely herself; in fact, the thing about Rosalind Akbar that he had found unpleasantly disconcerting was that she was always, first and last, a child of nature.

She looked round at him, and he was horrified at the change in her face; it was entirely drained of colour; and suddenly he was ashamed of his unkind thoughts, for she had evidently gone through an awful ordeal.

"Sit down," he said, kindly, "sit down, Rosalind. I'm more sorry than I can say that I was out to-night——"

"It's the first time, Mr. Hardwyke, that I've ever seen anybody die, or even anybody dead," she muttered in a low, shaky voice.

And then, still speaking in tremulous tones, she added: "I thought she would just lie back and die quietly. But she had such awful pain till we found some old morphia pills. Brown didn't want to give them to her, but they acted very quickly and were such a comfort! Brown thinks that perhaps they hastened her death?" She looked round her timorously, as if afraid that the walls might hear.

"I don't think morphia acts in that way at all," he said, shortly. "And, if it did, who could wish anyone to linger on in agony? I have a horror of the modern way of prolonging life a few weeks, a few days, even a few hours."

"So have I," she murmured, almost inaudibly.

He could see her lips twitching, and felt concerned about her, while yet again irritated. After all, she hadn't cared for her employer; she had actually disliked her.

BUT women are queer creatures! Leonard Hardwyke had all your philanderer's instinctive contempt for the other sex, though at times an infinite indulgence for, and understanding of, women.

He said abruptly: "I will, of course, sit up for Dr. Fenner. But you had better go to bed. The parish nurse has told me everything."

"I don't see how she can have told you *anything*, for I didn't send for her till after—after——"

He broke in impatiently: "I know that. But she told me enough to say everything that is necessary to Dr. Fenner."

The thought of sitting up here with the girl—as he used sometimes to sit up with her after the servants had all gone to bed, in the dangerous, foolish days that now seemed so long ago—was intolerable, the more so that Dr. Fenner might not come to-night after all.

She got up, like an automaton, and again he was frightened by the ghastly look of her face. "It was terrible," she said, brokenly. "Her suffering, I mean. And yet how callous people are! Brown thought it quite natural, and even Miss Dakin, when I told her about it, didn't seem to mind very much."

He took her cold hand and chafed it.

"Now look here, my dear!" He forced her down into her chair again. "You must try and pull yourself together! I know you've had a very terrible experience, and I'm bitterly sorry that I went out to-night, and that you faced it alone. But you always did your duty by Mrs. Hardwyke, and I'm sure you thought of everything a kind heart could suggest your doing for her to-night, and——"

She interrupted him roughly. "How does it feel to be free?" she asked, looking up into his face.

He winced, shocked at the atrocious taste of the question.

"You've often told me yourself," she went on, breathlessly, "that you were bound—not free! Now you *are* free, Leonard Hardwyke—how does it feel to be free?"

He looked round him nervously. Supposing one of the servants happened to be listening at the door! What a horrid thing to have whispered about him—that he had said he felt bound, not free! And what a fool he had been to say it to his wife's companion—to this hysterical, malicious girl! Hardwyke had said that sort of thing to so many women, but this was the first time a woman had been so unkind as to taunt him with it.

"It was wrong of me to say that—very wrong, Miss Akbar"; he spoke rather louder than usual. "Every married man is in a sense bound. But though you may find it difficult to believe it, I had a very real, indeed a deep, affection for my poor wife."

"Had you?" She started up from the chair where he had placed her. "Then, indeed, am I of all women the most miserable!"

"Don't talk like that," he said in a low voice—what to herself the unhappy girl called his "old" voice. "You are making me very miserable, Rosalind."

"Mr. Hardwyke"—she took a step nearer to him and gazed into his face with so strange and despairing a look that for the first time in his long, selfish life he felt ashamed of having made love to a woman—ashamed, as well as bitterly sorry—"do you think your wife died a natural death?"

"Of course I do. She was always an invalid, and her heart was in a bad state. I suppose she must have eaten something to-day at lunch that disagreed with her. Acute pain followed, and her heart gave way."

"You really believe that?" The girl looked at him fixedly.

"What else can I believe?"

He was puzzled by her manner. Was she trying to prolong their interview? Was she afraid of going off to bed? He hardly liked to suggest that she should take one of his poor wife's sleeping draughts, though that would be the wisest thing she could do.

Then there fell on his affrighted ears the words, uttered slowly and very distinctly: "*I* killed Mrs. Hardwyke. I gave her a large dose of antimony. No one else will ever know the truth, but I wish *you* to know at what a cost you have been made free." Her voice rising almost into a scream, she went on, speaking more and more quickly: "It's all very well for you to pretend now that you weren't unhappy—that you were attached to your wife. I know better! I know that you were wretched. But don't be afraid—you'll never see me again after to-morrow. My work is done here. I didn't mean you to know this—no one else will ever know——"

He put his hands heavily on her shoulders. "I don't believe a word of what you've been saying. *You* can't frighten me, you silly little fool! How dare you tell such a wicked, silly, dangerous lie?"

"Very well—go on believing that she died a natural death! I don't care"—she cried, hysterically.

He let her go. "I—I don't know what to believe," he muttered, and it was the truth.

There came a curious look over her pallid face. "I'm not like you," she cried, passionately. "*I* haven't had an easy, sheltered life. I've had to think things out for myself, Mr. Hardwyke, and I'm not a bit sorry for what I've done! What upset me was seeing her suffer."

And then she repeated the curious phrase he had heard her utter—was it a few minutes, or hours ago? "I thought she would simply lie back and die. You told me yourself, during the short time you really loved me, that her heart *might* give way at any time——"

He was gazing at her with a feeling of growing horror and repulsion. This was surely a nightmare he was living through? But what an awful nightmare.

"I ask you to confess," he said, firmly, "that what you have just told me is not true. That you said it only——"

"——To pay you out for all the unhappiness, the misery, the shame, you have caused me? Very well—have it so!"

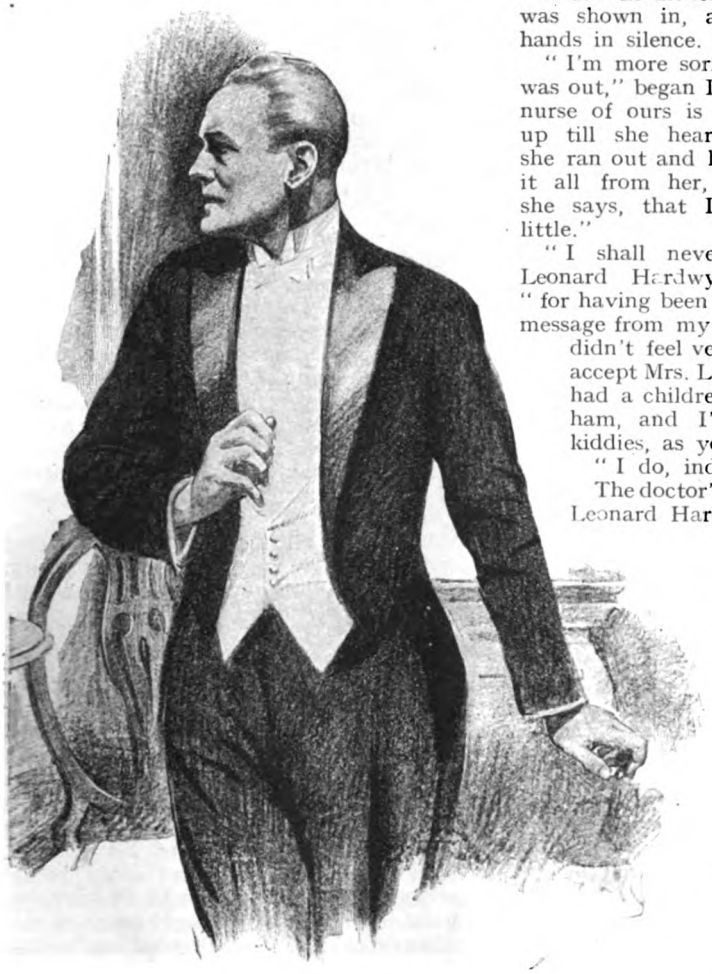
"Mr. Hardwyke, do you think

"The shame?" he repeated. "I don't know what you mean. We have nothing to be ashamed of—far from it."

She said, violently: "So *you* think, no doubt. But *I* am ashamed—horribly, debasedly ashamed, of having loved such

a creature as you. However, as I said just now, I'm going away to-morrow—you'll never be troubled with me any more."

He put up a warning hand. His quick ears had caught the sound of a motor rush-



your wife died a natural death?"

ing swiftly up the avenue. "There's Dr. Fenner!" he exclaimed.

He took her hand again. "I bitterly regret the suffering I have caused you. Still, you shouldn't have done what you did just now. It was a very cruel punishment for my having loved you. Come! Admit that it was!"

But her face, now, was the face of a mask. She wrenched her hand away. "You can make Brown get up—if the doctor really wants to hear what went on this evening," she said in a hard voice, and then she left the room.

A few moments later the country doctor was shown in, and the two men shook hands in silence.

"I'm more sorry than I can say that I was out," began Dr. Fenner. "That parish nurse of ours is a good soul—she waited up till she heard me go by, and then she ran out and hailed me. So I've heard it all from her, and I fear, from what she says, that I could have done very little."

"I shall never forgive myself," said Leonard Hardwyke in a broken voice, "for having been out to-night. But I got a message from my poor wife saying that she didn't feel very well, and urging me to accept Mrs. Langdon's invitation. They had a children's party over at Paringham, and I'm awfully fond of the kiddies, as you know, doctor."

"I do, indeed!"

The doctor's own children were among Leonard Hardwyke's warm friends and grateful admirers. He went on: "I'll see the coroner to-morrow, and try and get everything settled as soon as possible."

A feeling of icy fear suddenly clutched at Leonard Hardwyke's heart.

"The coroner?"

Dr. Fenner looked surprised. "I thought you realized that there'll have to be an inquest. Mrs. Hardwyke's dislike to members of my profession was unfortunate, in a way. If only I'd seen her within the last two or three weeks I could have signed the death certificate at once. But I haven't seen Mrs. Hardwyke since Armstrong came down from London, and that's months ago."

"I suppose it is," said Hardwyke, mechanically. "But there won't have to be a post-mortem, will there?"

"I'm afraid there will, Hardwyke."

The doctor looked uncomfortable. It is odd what a dislike even sensible people have to that simple affair.

He added: "Besides, I'm sure that for

your own sake you'd like to know why Mrs. Hardwyke died?"

"I thought we did know," said the other in a low voice.

"We don't know in the least what set up the violent internal inflammation. From what your wife's maid told the parish nurse, it does seem to me a little mysterious."

"They gave her some morphia pills," said Hardwyke, in an almost inaudible voice.

He felt as if his teeth were chattering, and it was a most disturbing feeling. He was remembering how, one day in the harness-room, he had told Rosalind Akbar of a famous antimony poisoning case called the Bravo Mystery. It had been recalled to his mind because there, on a shelf of his harness-room, was a bottle of the perilous stuff, a survival of the days when horses' coats were treated with antimony to make them bright. Fool, fool, *fool* that he had been!

He came back to the awful present to hear the doctor say: "I'm glad of that; morphia was the very best thing they could have given her."

WHILE these words were being uttered a thousand disconnected, questioning thoughts were rushing through Hardwyke's brain. Could he make an appeal here and now to Dr. Fenner? Would the promise of money—of a great deal of money—do any good? Reason answered "No," for Fenner was an honest man—far, far too honest. Then could nothing be done to stop what he now realized was going to happen? Again his clear, acute brain supplied the despairing answer—*nothing*.

"If you don't mind, I'll write to the coroner here. Then I'll drop it in his letter-box—it's only a minute out of my way."

The doctor walked across to the fine old writing bureau, and Hardwyke, sitting down, stared into the fire. Then, suddenly, he experienced a most peculiar and terrible hallucination.

Against the ancient iron fire-back, emblazoned with the Allways coat of arms at which he was staring with unseeing eyes, there was gradually formed a luminous square, across which stretched a platform on which stood a group of men. Of these men he only recognized Colonel Knox, Governor of the county prison, though there was a clergyman there, and a man who was obviously a doctor. To their left stood two men in uniform — warders? — holding a queer-looking, trussed-up, blindfolded figure, who looked at once familiar and unfamiliar. Was it—could it be—*himself?* He stared on at the mirage-like vision; and, gradually, he saw that behind that curious group of men there rose a square erection of beams, recalling to his mind the swing which had been his midsummer gift to Dr. Fenner's children.

Covering his face with his right hand, he shut his eyes, and when, at last, he looked again, there was nothing there.

Agonized, incoherent, unconnected thoughts and questionings—answers to these questionings, sometimes consoling, sometimes fearsome—jostled one another in his excited brain. The one rock to which he clung was his belief in the law of his country. In England there is no such thing as a miscarriage of justice; and then he remembered the Beck case.

Even so, what an infinite comfort to know that he was an absolutely innocent man. But he forced himself to face the fact that appearances would be terribly—terribly, but surely not absolutely?—against him. His brain marshalled them silently all before him. Even his wife's recent will would provide a motive, coupled with his idiotic, crazy, while yet, *yes*, absolutely innocent, flirtation with Rosalind Akbar.

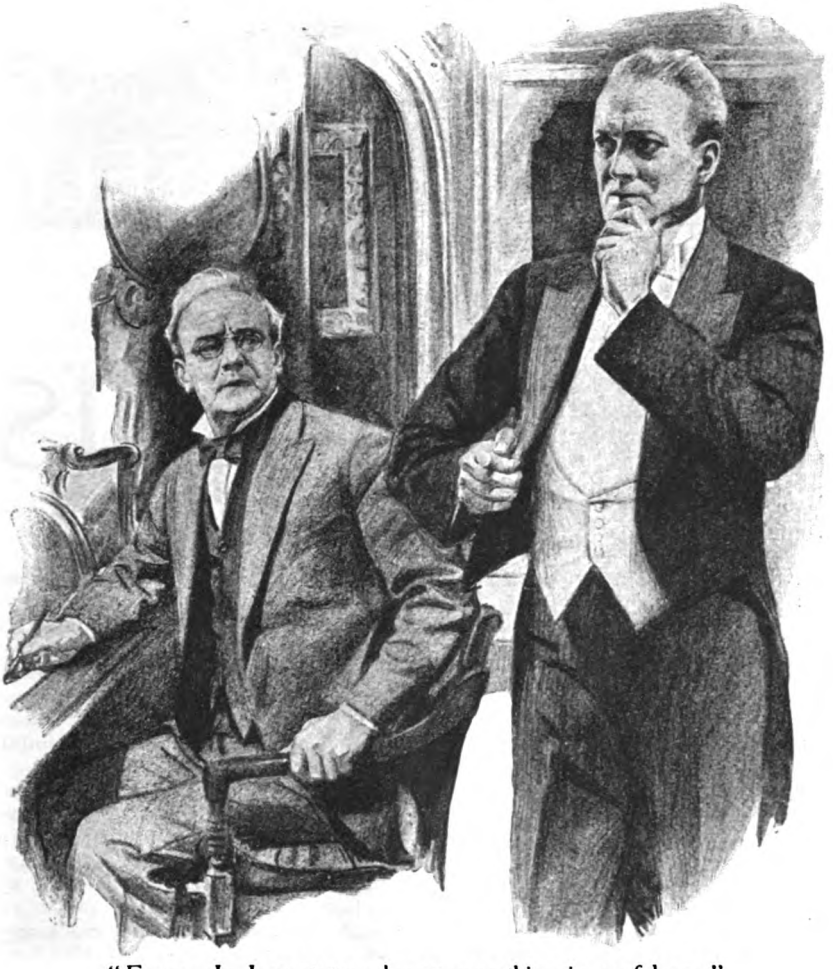
Who among all the men he now called friends, who among the women with whom he had had tender passages, would believe him innocent? Not one? Not one.

Even if Rosalind Akbar confessed the truth, who would believe that she was telling the whole truth? All he could hope for and fight for was the horrible thing called "the benefit of the doubt." That would leave him life, but very little else that such a man as himself valued. He had always been dependent—foolishly, extravagantly so—on the good opinion of his fellows. Henceforth, if the best that could befall him came to pass, he would be an Ishmael, a moral leper. Nowhere could he go in the English-speaking, English-reading, world without being pointed at as the man who, though he had escaped punishment—escaped punishment, good God!—had been tried for murder, and was probably guilty.

There came over him an intense feeling of pity for himself. His eyes began to smart with unshed tears. He told himself that he had done nothing to deserve the horrible thing that was relentlessly coming on him, and that he was a much better man, morally, than many of the men with whom life had brought him in contact. Yet they were free, while he was trapped, as a result of having merely—philandered.

He groaned, and the doctor, startled, turned sharply round in his chair.

Hardwyke was standing in the middle of the room. His face was twitching, his hands



"Fenner, I—I want to ask you something in confidence."

were, as if unconsciously, clasping and unclasping one another. And then, as he caught the other's look of amazement, he forced himself to smile—and it was a horrible smile.

"Fenner, I—I want to ask you something in confidence."

"Yes, Hardwyke?"

The doctor's voice was very cold.

"Is there anything in common between morphia and antimony?"

He tried to say the words lightly, but as soon as they had left his twitching lips he knew that he had failed.

"Good God—*no*—man!"

And then Dr. Fenner asked, in a low, strained voice: "Is there any antimony in this house?"

"Yes—no—there may be, in the harness-room."

The doctor got up and took a step forward. He laid his hand heavily on the other's shoulder. "I'd no right to ask you that question, Hardwyke. I'll forget your answer. But remember that anything you say from now on—may be used in evidence against you."

That same night Rosalind Akbar shot herself, and on the third of January Leonard Hardwyke was arrested on the charge of having murdered his wife.

CHESTER FORGETS HIMSELF

by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY
A. WALLIS MILLS

THE summer afternoon was warm and heavy. Butterflies loafed languidly in the sunshine, birds panted in the shady recesses of the trees. With the exception of an occasional perspiring bee that buzzed past intent on some mysterious duty, the only creatures exhibiting any activity were the members of a four-ball foursome working its way up the hill from the eighth tee. The Oldest Member of the club, snug in his favourite chair on the terrace overlooking the ninth green, had long since succumbed to the drowsy influence of the weather. His eyes were closed, his chin sunk upon his breast. The pipe which he had been smoking lay beside him on the turf, and ever and anon there proceeded from him a muffled snore. Two young men, wandering towards the tennis-courts, stepped lightly as they passed him. This was partly because they thought the nap would be good for their venerable friend; partly because it was his habit, when awake, to buttonhole the nearest person and relate to him one of the innumerable reminiscences of his golfing past. The Oldest Member, though he had not played since the days of the gutty ball, still kept in touch with the game through the medium of speech.

Suddenly the stillness was broken. There was a sharp, cracking sound as of splitting wood. It rang out like the report of a rifle, and the Oldest Member sat up, blinking. As soon as his eyes had become accustomed to the glare, he perceived that the foursome had holed out on the ninth and was disintegrating. Two of the players were moving with quick, purposeful steps in the direction of the side door which gave entrance to the bar; a third was making for the road that led to the village, bearing himself as one in profound dejection; the fourth came on to the terrace.

"Finished?" said the Oldest Member, accosting this individual.

The other stopped, wiping a heated brow. He lowered himself into the adjoining chair and stretched his legs out.

"Yes. We started at the tenth. Golly, I'm tired. No joke playing in this weather."

"How did you come out?"

"We won on the last green. Jimmy Fothergill and I were playing the vicar and Rupert Blake."

"What was that sharp, cracking sound I heard?" asked the Oldest Member.

His companion laughed, the care-free laugh of the man to whom the gods of golf have granted a happy ending.

"That was the vicar smashing his putter. He had a two-foot putt to halve the hole and match, and he missed it. Poor old chap, he had rotten luck all the way round, and it didn't seem to make it any better for him that he wasn't able to relieve his feelings in the ordinary way. Golly, I'm tired," he said once more, and, wriggling himself into a more comfortable position, he closed his eyes.

"I suspected some such thing," said the Oldest Member, "from the look of his back as he was leaving the green. His walk was the walk of an overwrought soul."

His companion did not reply. He was breathing deeply and regularly.

"It is a moot question," proceeded the Oldest Member thoughtfully, "whether the clergy, considering their peculiar position, should not be more liberally handicapped at

Copyright, 1924, by P. G. Wodehouse.

golf than the laymen with whom they compete. I have made a close study of the game since the days of the feather ball, and I am firmly convinced that to refrain entirely from oaths during a round is almost equivalent to giving away three bisques. There are certain occasions when an oath seems to be so imperatively demanded that the strain of keeping it in must inevitably affect the ganglions or nerve-centres in such a manner as to diminish the steadiness of the swing."

The man beside him slipped lower down in his chair. His mouth had opened slightly.

"I am reminded in this connection," said the Oldest Member, "of the story of young Chester Meredith, a friend of mine whom you have not, I think, met. He moved from this neighbourhood shortly before you came. There was a case where a man's whole happiness was very nearly wrecked purely because he tried to curb his instincts and thwart nature in this very respect. Perhaps you would care to hear the story?"

A snore proceeded from the next chair.

"Very well, then," said the Oldest Member, "I will relate it."

CHESTER MEREDITH (said the Oldest Member) was one of the nicest young fellows of my acquaintance. We had been friends ever since he had come to live here as a small boy, and I had watched him with a fatherly eye through all the more important crises of a young man's life. It was I who taught him to drive, and when he had all that trouble in his twenty-first year with shanking his short approaches, it was to me that he came for sympathy and advice. It was an odd coincidence, therefore, that I should have been present when he fell in love.

I was smoking my evening cigar out here and watching the last couples finishing their rounds, when Chester came out of the club-house and sat by me. I could see that the boy was perturbed about something, and wondered why, for I knew that he had won his match.

"What," I inquired, "is on your mind?"

"Oh, nothing," said Chester. "I was only thinking that there are some human misfits who ought not to be allowed on any decent links."

"You mean——?"

"The Wrecking Crew," said Chester, bitterly. "They held us up all the way round, confound them. Wouldn't let us through. What can you do with people who don't know enough of the etiquette of the game to understand that a single has right of way over a four-ball foursome? We had to loaf about for hours on end while they scratched at the turf like a lot of crimson hens. Eventually all four of them lost their balls simultaneously at the eleventh and we managed to get by. I hope they choke."

I was not altogether surprised at his warmth. This Wrecking Crew consisted of four retired business men who had taken up the noble game late in life because their doctors had ordered them air and exercise. Every club, I suppose, has a cross of this kind to bear, and it was not often that our members rebelled; but there was undoubtedly something particularly irritating in the methods of the Wrecking Crew. They tried so hard that it seemed almost inconceivable that they should be so slow.

"They are all respectable men," I said, "and were, I believe, highly thought of in their respective businesses. But on the links I admit that they are a trial."

"They are the direct lineal descendants of the Gadarene swine," said Chester, firmly. "Every time they come out I expect to see them rush down the hill from the first tee and hurl themselves into the lake at the second. Of all the——"

"Hush!" I said.

Out of the corner of my eye I had seen a girl approaching, and I was afraid lest Chester in his annoyance might use strong language. For he was one of those golfers who are apt to express themselves in moments of emotion with a good deal of generous warmth.

"Eh?" said Chester.

I jerked my head, and he looked round. And, as he did so, there came into his face an expression which I had seen there only once before, on the occasion when he won the President's Cup on the last green by holing a thirty-yard chip with his mashie. It was a look of ecstasy and awe. His mouth was open, his eyebrows raised, and he was breathing heavily through his nose.

"Golly!" I heard him mutter.

The girl passed by. I could not blame Chester for staring at her. She was a beautiful young thing, with a lissom figure and a perfect face. Her hair was a deep chestnut, her eyes blue, her nose small and laid back with about as much loft as a light iron. She disappeared, and Chester, after nearly dislocating his neck trying to see her round the corner of the club-house, emitted a deep, explosive sigh.

"Who is she?" he whispered.

I could tell him that. In one way and another I get to know most things around this locality.

"She is a Miss Blakeney. Felicia Blakeney. She has come to stay for a month with the Waterfields. I understand she was at school with Jane Waterfield. She is twenty-three, has a dog named Joseph, dances well,

and dislikes parsnips. Her father is a distinguished writer on sociological subjects; her mother is Wilmot Royce, the well-known novelist, whose last work, 'Sewers of the Soul,' was, you may recall, jerked before a tribunal by the Purity League. She has a brother, Crispin Blakeney, an eminent young reviewer and essayist, who is now in India studying local conditions with a view to a series of lectures. She only arrived here yesterday, so this is all I have been able to find out about her as yet."

Chester's mouth was still open when I began speaking. By the time I had finished it was open still wider. The ecstatic look in his eyes had changed to one of dull despair.

"My God!" he muttered. "If her family is like that, what chance is there for a roughneck like me?"

"You admire her?"

"She is the alligator's Adam's apple," said Chester, simply.

I patted his shoulder.

"Have courage, my boy," I said. "Always remember that the love of a good man to whom the pro. can only give a couple of strokes in eighteen holes is not to be despised."

"Yes, that's all very well. But this girl is probably one solid mass of brain. She will look on me as an uneducated wart-hog."

"Well, I will introduce you, and we will see. She looked a nice girl."

"You're a great describer, aren't you?" said Chester. "A wonderful flow of language you've got, I don't think! Nice girl! Why, she's the only girl in the world. She's a pearl among women. She's the most marvellous, astounding, beautiful, heavenly thing that ever drew perfumed breath." He paused, as if his train of thought had been interrupted by an idea. "Did you say that her brother's name was Crispin?"

"I did. Why?"

Chester gave vent to a few manly oaths.

"Doesn't that just show you how things go in this rotten world?"

"What do you mean?"

"I was at school with him."

"Surely that should form a solid basis for friendship?"

"Should it? Should it, by gad? Well, let me tell you that I probably kicked that blighted worm Crispin Blakeney a matter of seven hundred and forty-six times in the few years I knew him. He was the world's worst. He could have walked straight into the Wrecking Crew and no questions asked. Wouldn't it jar you? I have the luck to know her brother, and it turns out that we couldn't stand the sight of each other."

"Well, there is no need to tell her that."

"Do you mean——?" He gazed at me wildly. "Do you mean I might pretend we were pals?"

"Why not? Seeing that he is in India, he can hardly contradict you."

"My gosh!" He mused for a moment. I could see that the idea was beginning to sink in. It was always thus with Chester. You had to give him time. "By Jove, it mightn't be a bad scheme at that. I mean, it would start me off with a rush, like being one up on bogey in the first two. And there's nothing like a good start. By gad, I'll do it."

"I should."

"Reminiscences of the dear old days when we were lads together, and all that sort of thing."

"Precisely."

"It isn't going to be easy, mind you," said Chester, meditatively. "I'll do it because I love her, but nothing else in this world would make me say a civil word about the blister. Well, then, that's settled. Get on with the introduction stuff, will you? I'm in a hurry."

ONE of the privileges of age is that it enables a man to thrust his society on a beautiful girl without causing her to draw herself up and say "Sir!" It was not difficult for me to make the acquaintance of Miss Blakeney, and, this done, my first act was to unleash Chester on her.

"Chester," I said, summoning him as he loafed with an overdone carelessness on the horizon, one leg almost inextricably entwined about the other, "I want you to meet Miss Blakeney. Miss Blakeney, this is my young friend Chester Meredith. He was at school with your brother Crispin. You were great friends, were you not?"

"Bosom," said Chester, after a pause.

"Oh, really?" said the girl. There was a pause. "He is in India now."

"Yes," said Chester.

There was another pause.

"Great chap," said Chester, gruffly.

"Crispin is very popular," said the girl, "with some people."

"Always been my best pal," said Chester.

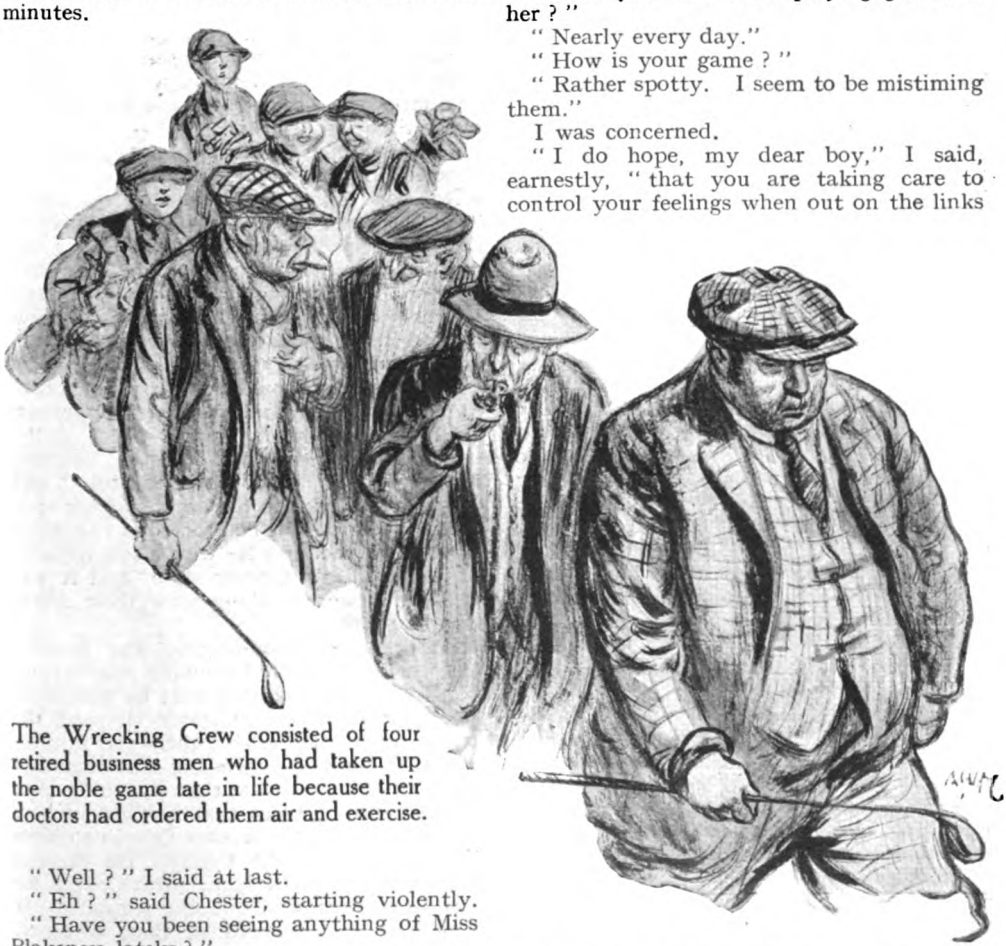
"Yes?"

I was not altogether satisfied with the way matters were developing. The girl seemed cold and unfriendly, and I was afraid that this was due to Chester's repellent manner. Shyness, especially when complicated by love at first sight, is apt to have strange effects on a man, and the way it had taken Chester was to make him abnormally stiff and dignified. One of the most charming things about him was his delightful boyish smile. Shyness had caused him to iron this

out of his countenance till no trace of it remained. Not only did he not smile, he looked like a man who never had smiled and never would. His mouth was a thin, rigid line. His back was stiff with what appeared to be contemptuous aversion. He looked down his nose at Miss Blakeney as if she were less than the dust beneath his chariot-wheels.

I thought the best thing to do was to leave them alone together to get acquainted. Perhaps, I thought, it was my presence that was cramping Chester's style. I excused myself and receded.

IT was some days before I saw Chester again. He came round to my cottage one night after dinner and sank into a chair, where he remained silent for several minutes.



The Wrecking Crew consisted of four retired business men who had taken up the noble game late in life because their doctors had ordered them air and exercise.

"Well?" I said at last.

"Eh?" said Chester, starting violently.

"Have you been seeing anything of Miss Blakeney lately?"

"You bet I have."

"And how do you feel about her on further acquaintance?"

"Eh?" said Chester, absently.

"Do you still love her?"

Chester came out of his trance.

"Love her?" he cried, his voice vibrating with emotion. "Of course I love her. Who wouldn't love her? I'd be a silly chump not loving her. Do you know," the boy went on, a look in his eyes like that of some young knight seeing the Holy Grail in a vision, "do you know, she is the only woman I ever met who didn't overswing. Just a nice, crisp, snappy half-slosh, with a good full follow-through. And another thing. You'll hardly believe me, but she waggled almost as little as George Duncan. You know how women waggle as a rule, fiddling about for a minute and a half like kittens playing with a ball of wool. Well, she just makes one firm pass with the club and then *bing!* There is none like her, none."

"Then you have been playing golf with her?"

"Nearly every day."

"How is your game?"

"Rather spotty. I seem to be mistiming them."

I was concerned.

"I do hope, my dear boy," I said, earnestly, "that you are taking care to control your feelings when out on the links with Miss Blakeney. You know what you are like. I trust you have not been using the sort of language you generally employ on occasions when you are not timing them right?"

"Me?" said Chester, horrified. "Who, me? You don't imagine for a moment that I would dream of saying a thing that would bring a blush to her dear cheek, do you? Why, a bishop could have gone round with me and learned nothing new."

I was relieved.

"How do you find you manage the dialogue these days?" I asked. "When I introduced you, you behaved—you will forgive an old friend for criticizing—you behaved a little like a stuffed frog with laryngitis. Have things got easier in that respect?"

"Oh, yes. I'm quite the prattler now. I talk about her brother mostly. I put in the greater part of my time boosting the tick. It seems to be coming easier. Will-power, I suppose. And then, of course, I talk a good deal about her mother's novels."

"Have you read them?"

"Every damned one of them—for her sake. And if there's a greater proof of love than that, show me! My gosh, what muck that woman writes! That reminds me, I've got to send to the bookshop for her latest—out yesterday. It's called 'The Stench of Life.' A sequel, I understand, to 'Grey Mildew.'"

"Brave lad," I said, pressing his hand. "Brave, devoted lad!"

"Oh, I'd do more than that for her." He smoked for awhile in silence. "By the way, I'm going to propose to her to-morrow."

"Already?"

"Can't put it off a minute longer. It's been as much as I could manage, bottling it up till now. Where do you think would be the best place? I mean, it's not the sort of thing you can do while you're walking down the street or having a cup of tea. I thought of asking her to have a round with me and taking a stab at it on the links."

"You could not do better. The links—Nature's cathedral."

"Right-o, then! I'll let you know how I come out."

"I wish you luck, my boy," I said.

AND what of Felicia, meanwhile? She was, alas, far from returning the devotion which scorched Chester's vital organs. He seemed to her precisely the sort of man she most disliked. From childhood up Felicia Blakeney had lived in an atmosphere of highbrowism, and the type of husband she had always seen in her daydreams was the man who was simple and straightforward and earthy and did not know whether Artbashiekeff was a suburb of Moscow or a new kind of Russian drink. A man like Chester, who on his own statement would rather read one of her mother's novels than eat, revolted her. And his warm affection for her brother Crispin set the seal on her distaste.

Felicia was a dutiful child, and she loved her parents. It took a bit of doing, but she did it. But at her brother Crispin she drew the line. He wouldn't do, and his friends were worse than he was. They were high-voiced, supercilious, pince-nezed young men who talked patronizingly of Life and Art, and Chester's unblushing confession that he was one of them had put him ten down and nine to play right away.

You may wonder why the boy's undeniable skill on the links had no power to soften the girl. The unfortunate fact was that all the good effects of his prowess were neutralized by his behaviour while playing. All her life she had treated golf with a proper reverence and awe, and in Chester's attitude towards the game she seemed to detect a horrible shallowness. The fact is, Chester, in his efforts to keep himself from using strong language, had found a sort of relief in a girlish giggle, and it made her shudder every time she heard it.

His deportment, therefore, in the space of time leading up to the proposal could not have been more injurious to his cause. They started out quite happily, Chester doing a nice two-hundred-yarder off the first tee, which for a moment awoke the girl's respect. But at the fourth, after a lovely brassie-shot, he found his ball deeply embedded in the print of a woman's high heel. It was just one of those rubs of the green which normally would have caused him to ease his bosom with a flood of sturdy protest but now he was on his guard.

"Tee-hee!" simpered Chester, reaching for his niblick. "Too bad, too bad!" and the girl shuddered to the depths of her soul.

Having holed out, he proceeded to enliven the walk to the next tee with a few remarks on her mother's literary style, and it was while they were walking after their drives that he proposed.

His proposal, considering the circumstances, could hardly have been less happily worded. Little knowing that he was rushing upon his doom, Chester stressed the Crispin note. He gave Felicia the impression that he was suggesting this marriage more for Crispin's sake than anything else. He conveyed the idea that he thought how nice it would be for brother Crispin to have his old chum in the family. He drew a picture of their little home, with Crispin for ever popping in and out like a rabbit. It is not to be wondered at that, when at length he had finished and she had time to speak, the horrified girl turned him down with a thud.

It is at moments such as these that a man reaps the reward of a good upbringing.

In similar circumstances those who have not had the benefit of a sound training in golf are too apt to go wrong. Goaded by the sudden anguish, they take to drink, plunge into dissipation, and write *vers libre*. Chester was mercifully saved from this. I saw him the day after he had been handed the mitten, and was struck by the look of grim determination in his face. Deeply wounded though he was, I could see that he was the master of his fate and the captain of his soul.

"I am sorry, my boy," I said, sympathetically, when he had told me the painful news.

"It can't be helped," he replied, bravely.

"Her decision was final?"

"Quite."

"You do not contemplate having another pop at her?"

He found his ball deeply embedded in the print of a woman's high heel.

"No good. I know when I'm licked."

I patted him on the shoulder and said the only thing it seemed possible to say.

"After all, there is always golf."

He nodded.

"Yes. My game needs a lot of tuning up. Now is the time to do it. From now on I go at this pastime seriously. I make it my life-work. Who knows?" he murmured, with a sudden gleam in his eyes. "The Amateur Championship——"

"The Open!" I cried, falling gladly into his mood.

"The American Amateur," said Chester, flushing.

"The American Open," I chorused.

"No one has ever copped all four."

"No one."

"Watch me!" said Chester Meredith, simply.

IT was about two weeks after this that I happened to look in on Chester at his house one morning. I found him about to start for the links. As he had foreshadowed in the conversation which I have just related, he now spent most of the daylight hours on the course. In these two weeks he had gone about his task of achieving perfection with a furious energy which made him the talk of the club. Always one of the best players in the place, he had developed an astounding brilliance. Men who had played him level were now obliged to receive two and even three strokes. The pro. himself, conceding one, had only succeeded in halving their match. The struggle for the President's Cup came round once more, and Chester won it for the second time with ridiculous ease.

When I arrived, he was practising chip-shots in his sitting-room. I noticed that he seemed to be labouring under some strong emotion, and his first words gave me the clue.

"She's going away to-morrow," he said, abruptly, lofting a ball over the whatnot on to the Chesterfield.

I was not sure whether I was sorry or relieved. Her absence would leave a terrible

blank, of course, but it might be that it would help him to get over his infatuation.

"Ah!" I said, non-committally.

Chester addressed his ball with a well-assumed phlegm, but I could see by the way his ears wiggled that he was feeling deeply. I was not surprised when he topped his shot into the coal-scuttle.

"She has promised to play a last round with me this morning," he said.

Again I was doubtful what view to take. It was a pretty, poetic idea, not unlike Browning's "Last Ride Together," but I was not sure if it was altogether wise. However, it was none of my business, so I merely patted him on the shoulder and he gathered up his clubs and went off.

•

OWING to motives of delicacy I had not offered to accompany him on his round, and it was not till later that I learned the actual details of what occurred. At the start, it seems, the spiritual anguish which he was suffering had a depressing effect on his game. He hooked his drive off the first tee and was only enabled to get a five by means of a strong niblick shot out of the rough. At the second, the lake hole, he lost a ball in the water and got another five. It was only at the third that he began to pull himself together.

The test of a great golfer is his ability to recover from a bad start. Chester had this quality to a pre-eminent degree. A lesser man, conscious of being three over bogey for the first two holes, might have looked on his round as ruined. To Chester it simply meant that he had to get a couple of "birdies" right speedily, and he set about it at once. Always a long driver, he excelled himself at the third. It is, as you know, an uphill hole all the way, but his drive could not have come far short of two hundred and fifty yards. A brassie-shot of equal strength and unerring direction put him on the edge of the green, and he holed out with a long putt two under bogey. He had hoped for a "birdie" and he had achieved an "eagle."

I think that this splendid feat must have softened Felicia's heart, had it not been for the fact that misery had by this time entirely robbed Chester of the ability to smile. Instead, therefore, of behaving in the wholesome, natural way of men who get threes at bogey five holes, he preserved a drawn, impassive countenance; and as she watched him tee up her ball, stiff, correct, polite, but to all outward appearance absolutely inhuman, the girl found herself stifling that thrill of what for a moment had been almost adoration. It was, she felt, exactly how her brother Crispin would have comported himself if he had done a hole in two under bogey.

And yet she could not altogether check a wistful sigh when, after a couple of fours at the next two holes, he picked up another stroke on the sixth and with an inspired spoon-shot brought his medal-score down to one better than bogey by getting a two at the hundred-and-seventy-yard seventh. But the brief spasm of tenderness passed, and when he finished the first nine with two more fours she refrained from anything warmer than a mere word of stereotyped congratulation.

"One under bogey for the first nine," she said. "Splendid!"

"One under bogey!" said Chester, woodenly.

"Out in thirty-four. What is the record for the course?"

Chester started. So great had been his preoccupation that he had not given a thought to the course record. He suddenly realized now that the pro., who had done the lowest medal-score to date—the other course record was held by Peter Willard with a hundred and sixty-one, achieved in his first season—had gone out in only one better than his own figures that day.

"Sixty-eight," he said.

"What a pity you lost those strokes at the beginning!"

"Yes," said Chester.

He spoke absently—and, as it seemed to her, primly and without enthusiasm—for the flaming idea of having a go at the course record had only just occurred to him. Once before he had done the first nine in thirty-four, but on that occasion he had not felt that curious feeling of irresistible force which comes to a golfer at the very top of his form. Then he had been aware all the time that he had been putting chancily. They had gone in, yes, but he had uttered a prayer per putt. To-day he was superior to any weak doubtings. When he tapped the ball on the green, he knew it was going to sink. The course record? Why not? What a last offering to lay at her feet! She would go away, out of his life for ever; she would marry some other bird; but the memory of that supreme round would remain with her as ong as she breathed. When he won the Open and Amateur for the second—the third—the fourth time, she would say to herself, "I was with him when he dented the record for his home course!" And he had only to pick up a couple of strokes on the last nine, to do threes at holes where he was wont to be satisfied with fours. Yes, by Vardon, he would take a whirl at it.

For a swift instant red-hot words rose to his lips, but he crushed them back. "Tut!" said Chester.

YOU, who are acquainted with these links, will no doubt say that the task which Chester Meredith had sketched out for himself—cutting two strokes off thirty-five for the second nine—was one at which Humanity might well shudder. The pro. himself, who had finished sixth in the last Open Championship, had never done better than a thirty-five, playing perfect golf and being one under bogey. But such was Chester's mood that, as he teed up on the tenth, he did not even consider the possibility of failure. Every muscle in his body was working in perfect co-ordination with its fellows, his wrists felt as if they were made of tempered steel, and his eyes had just that hawk-like quality which enables a man to judge his short approaches to the inch. He swung forcefully, and the ball sailed so close to the direction-post that for a moment it seemed as if it had hit it.

"Oo!" cried Felicia.

Chester did not speak. He was following the flight of the ball. It sailed over the brow of the hill, and with his knowledge of the course he could tell almost the exact patch of turf on which it must have come to rest. An iron would do the business from there, and a single putt would give him the first of the "birdies" he required. Two minutes later he had holed out a six-foot putt for a three.

"Oo!" said Felicia again.

Chester walked to the eleventh tee in silence.

"No, never mind," she said, as he stooped to put her ball on the sand. "I don't think I'll play any more. I'd much rather just watch you."

"Oh, that you could watch me through life!" said Chester, but he said it to himself. His actual words were "Very well!" and he spoke them with a stiff coldness which chilled the girl.

The eleventh is one of the trickiest holes on the course, as no doubt you have found out for yourself. It looks absurdly simple, but that little patch of wood on the right that seems so harmless is placed just in the deadliest position to catch even the most slightly sliced drive. Chester's lacked the austere precision of his last. A hundred yards from the tee it swerved almost imperceptibly, and, striking a branch, fell in the tangled undergrowth. It took him two strokes to hack it out and put it on the green, and then his long putt, after quivering on the edge of the hole, stayed there. For a swift instant red-hot words rose to his lips, but he caught them just as they were coming out and crushed them back. He looked at his ball and he looked at the hole.

"Tut!" said Chester.

Felicia uttered a deep sigh. That niblick-shot out of the rough had impressed her profoundly. If only, she felt, this superb

golfer had been more human! Already, after watching him play the last nine holes, she had picked up more pointers about the game than the pro. of her home club had been able to teach her in six months. If only she were able to be constantly in this man's society, to see exactly what it was that he did with his left wrist that gave that terrific snap to his drives, she might acquire the knack herself one of these days. For she was a clear-thinking, honest girl, and thoroughly realized that she did not get the distance she ought to with her wood. With a husband like Chester beside her to stimulate and advise, of what might she not be capable? If she got wrong in her stance, he could put her right with a word. If she had a bout of slicing, how quickly he would tell her what caused it. And she knew that she had only to speak a word to wipe out the effects of her refusal, to bring him to her side for ever.

But could a girl pay such a price? When he had got that "eagle" on the third, he had looked bored. When he had missed this last putt, he had not seemed to care. "Tut!" What a word to use at such a moment! No, she felt sadly, it could not be done. To marry Chester Meredith, she told herself, would be like marrying a composite of Soames Forsyte, Sir Willoughby Patterne, and all her brother Crispin's friends. She sighed and was silent.

CHESTER, standing on the twelfth tee, reviewed the situation swiftly, like a general before a battle. There were seven holes to play, and he had to do these in two better than bogey. The one that faced him now offered few opportunities. It was a long, slogging, dog-leg hole, and even Ray and Taylor, when they had played their exhibition game on the course, had taken fives. No opening there.

The thirteenth—up a steep hill with a long iron-shot for one's second and a blind green fringed with bunkers? Scarcely practicable to hope for better than a four. The fourteenth—into the valley with the ground sloping sharply down to the ravine? He had once done it in three, but it had been a fluke. No; on these three holes he must be content to play for a steady bogey and trust to picking up a stroke on the fifteenth.

The fifteenth, straightforward up to the plateau green with its circle of bunkers, presents few difficulties to the finished golfer who is on his game. A bunker meant nothing to Chester in his present conquering vein. His mashie-shot second soared almost contemptuously over the chasm and rolled to within a foot of the pin. He came to the sixteenth with the clear-cut problem before him of snipping two strokes off bogey on the last three holes.

To the unthinking man, not acquainted with the lay-out of our links, this would no doubt appear a tremendous feat. But the fact is, the Green Committee, with perhaps an unduly sentimental bias towards the happy ending, have arranged a comparatively easy finish to the course. The sixteenth is a perfectly plain hole with broad fairway and a down-hill run; the seventeenth, a one-shot affair with no difficulties for the man who keeps them straight; and the eighteenth, though its up-hill run makes it deceptive to the stranger and leads the unwary to take a mashie instead of a light iron for his second, has no real venom in it. Even Peter Willard has occasionally come home in a canter with a six, five, and seven, conceding himself only two eight-foot putts. It is, I think, this mild conclusion to a tough course that makes the refreshment-room of our club so noticeable for its sea of happy faces. The bar every day is crowded with rejoicing men who, forgetting the agonies of the first fifteen, are babbling of what they did on the last three. The seventeenth, with its possibilities of holing out a topped second, is particularly soothing.

Chester Meredith was not the man to top his second on any hole, so this supreme bliss did not come his way; but he laid a beautiful mashie-shot dead and got a three; and when with his iron he put his first well on the green at the seventeenth and holed out for a two, life, for all his broken heart, seemed pretty tolerable. He now had the situation well in hand. He had only to play his usual game to get a four on the last and lower the course record by one stroke.

It was at this supreme moment of his life that he ran into the Wrecking Crew.

You doubtless find it difficult to understand how it came about that if the Wrecking Crew were on the course at all he had not run into them long before. The explanation is that, with a regard for the etiquette of the game unusual in these miserable men, they had for once obeyed the law that enacts that foursomes shall start at the tenth. They had begun their dark work on the second nine, accordingly, at almost the exact moment when Chester Meredith was driving off at the first, and this had enabled them to keep ahead until now. When Chester came to the eighteenth tee, they were just leaving it, moving up the fairway with their caddies in mass formation and looking to his exasperated eye like one of those great race-migrations of the Middle Ages. Wherever Chester looked he seemed to see human, so to speak figures. One was doddering about in the

long grass fifty yards from the tee, others debouched to left and right. The course was crawling with them.

Chester sat down on the bench with a weary sigh. He knew these men. Self-centred, remorseless, deaf to all the promptings of their better nature, they never let anyone through. There was nothing to do but wait.

The Wrecking Crew scratched on. The man near the tee rolled his ball ten yards, then twenty, then thirty—he was improving. Ere long he would be out of range. Chester rose and swished his driver.

But the end was not yet. The individual operating in the rough on the left had been advancing in slow stages, and now, finding his ball teed up on a tuft of grass, he opened his shoulders and let himself go. There was a loud report, and the ball, hitting a tree squarely, bounded back almost to the tee, and all the weary work was to do again. By the time Chester was able to drive, he was reduced by impatience, and the necessity of refraining from commenting on the state of affairs as he would have wished to comment, to a frame of mind in which no man could have kept himself from pressing. He pressed, and topped. The ball skidded over the turf for a meagre hundred yards.

"D-d-d-dear me!" said Chester.

The next moment he uttered a bitter laugh. Too late a miracle had happened. One of the foul figures in front was waving its club. Other ghastly creatures were withdrawing to the side of the fairway. Now, when the harm had been done, these outcasts were signalling to him to go through. The hollow mockery of the thing swept over Chester like a wave. What was the use of going through now? He was a good three hundred yards from the green, and he needed bogey at this hole to break the record. Almost absently he drew his brassie from his bag; then, as the full sense of his wrongs bit into his soul, he swung viciously.

Golf is a strange game. Chester had pressed on the tee and foozled. He pressed now, and achieved the most perfect shot of his life. The ball shot from its place as if a charge of powerful explosive were behind it. Never deviating from a straight line, never more than six feet from the ground, it sailed up the hill, crossed the bunker, eluded the mounds beyond, struck the turf, rolled, and stopped fifty feet from the hole. It was the brassie-shot of a lifetime, and shrill senile yippings of excitement and congratulation floated down from the Wrecking Crew. For, degraded though they were, these men were not wholly devoid of human instincts.

Chester drew a deep breath. His ordeal was over That third shot, which would lay the ball right up to the pin, was precisely the sort of thing he did best. Almost from boyhood he had been a wizard at the short approach. He could hole out in two now on his left ear. He strode up the hill to his ball. It could not have been lying better. Two inches away there was a nasty cup in the turf; but it had avoided this and was sitting nicely perched up, smiling an invitation to the mashie-niblick. Chester shuffled his feet and eyed the flag keenly. Then he stooped to play, and Felicia watched him breathlessly. Her whole being seemed to be concentrated on him. She had forgotten everything save that she was seeing a course record get broken. She could not have been more wrapped up in his success if she had had large sums of money on it.

THE Wrecking Crew, meanwhile, had come to life again. They had stopped twittering about Chester's brassie-shot and were thinking of resuming their own game. Even in foursomes where fifty yards is reckoned a good shot somebody must be away, and the man whose turn it was to play was the one who had acquired from his brother-members of the club the nickname of the First Grave-Digger.

A word about the human wen. He was—if there can be said to be grades in such a sub-species—the star performer of the Wrecking Crew. The lunches of fifty-seven years had caused his chest to slip down into the mezzanine floor, but he was still a powerful man, and had in his youth been a hammer-thrower of some repute. He differed from his colleagues—the Man With the Hoe, Old Father Time, and Consul, the Almost Human—in that, while they were content to peck cautiously at the ball, he never spared himself in his efforts to do it a violent injury. Frequently he had cut a blue dot almost in half with his niblick. He was completely muscle-bound, so that he seldom achieved anything beyond a series of chasms in the turf, but he was always trying, and it was his secret belief that, given two or three miracles happening simultaneously, he would one of these days bring off a snifter. Years of disappointment had, however, reduced the flood of hope to a mere trickle, and when he took his brassie now and addressed the ball he had no immediate plans beyond a vague intention of rolling the thing a few yards farther up the hill.

The fact that he had no business to play at all till Chester had holed out did not occur to him; and even if it had occurred he would have dismissed the objection as finicking. Chester, bending over his ball, was nearly two hundred yards away—or the distance of three full brassie-shots.

The First Grave-Digger did not hesitate. He whirled up his club as in distant days he had been wont to swing the hammer, and, with the grunt which this performance always wrung from him, brought it down.

Golfers—and I stretch this term to include the Wrecking Crew—are a highly imitative race. The spectacle of a flubber flubbing ahead of us on the fairway inclines to make us flub as well; and, conversely, it is immediately after we have seen a magnificent shot that we are apt to eclipse ourselves. Consciously the Grave-Digger had no notion how Chester had made that superb brassie-biff of his, but all the while I suppose his subconscious self had been taking notes. At any rate, on this one occasion he, too, did the shot of a lifetime. As he opened his eyes, which he always shut tightly at the moment of impact, and started to unravel himself from the complicated tangle in which his follow-through had left him, he perceived the ball breasting the hill like some untamed jack-rabbit of the Californian prairie.

For a moment his only emotion was one of dreamlike amazement. He stood looking at the ball with a wholly impersonal wonder, like a man suddenly confronted with some terrific work of Nature. Then, as a sleep-walker awakens, he came to himself with a start. Directly in front of the flying pilule was a man bending to make an approach-shot.

Chester, always a concentrated golfer when there was man's work to do, had scarcely heard the crack of the brassie behind him. Certainly he had paid no attention to it. His whole mind was fixed on his stroke. He measured with his eye the distance to the pin, noted the down-slope of the green, and shifted his stance a little to allow for it. Then, with a final swift waggle, he laid his club-head behind the ball and slowly raised it. It was just coming down when the world became full of shouts of "Fore!" and something hard smote him violently on the seat of his plus-fours.

THE supreme tragedies of life leave us momentarily stunned. For an instant which seemed an age Chester could not understand what had happened. True, he realized that there had been an earthquake, a cloud-burst, and a railway accident, and that a high building had fallen on him at the exact moment when somebody had shot him with a gun, but these happenings would account for only a small part of his sensations. He blinked several times, and rolled his eyes wildly. And it was while rolling them that he caught sight of the gesticulating Wrecking Crew on the lower slopes and found enlightenment. Simultaneously, he observed his ball only a yard and a half from where it had been when he addressed it.

Chester Meredith gave one look at his ball, one look at the flag, one look at the Wrecking Crew, one look at the sky. His lips writhed, his forehead turned vermilion. Beads of perspiration started out on his forehead. And then, with his whole soul seething like a cistern struck by a thunderbolt, he spoke.

"!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" cried Chester.

Dimly he was aware of a wordless exclamation from the girl beside him, but he was too distraught to think of her now. It was as if all the oaths pent up within his bosom for so many weary days were struggling and jostling to see which could get out first. They cannoned into each other, they linked hands and formed parties, they got themselves all mixed up in weird vowel-sounds, the second syllable of some red-hot verb forming a temporary union with the first syllable of some blistering noun.

"——! ——!! ——!!! ——!!!! ——!!!!!" cried Chester.

Felicia stood staring at him. In her eyes was the look of one who sees visions.

"*** !!! *** !!! *** !!! *** !!!" roared Chester, in part.

A great wave of emotion flooded over the girl. How she had misjudged this silver-tongued man! She shivered as she thought that, had this not happened, in another five minutes they would have parted for ever, sundered by seas of misunderstanding, she cold and scornful, he with all his music still within him.

"Oh, Mr. Meredith!" she cried, faintly.

With a sickening abruptness Chester came to himself. It was as if somebody had poured a pint of ice-cold water down his back. He blushed vividly. He realized with horror and shame how grossly he had offended against all the canons of decency and good taste. He felt like the man in one of those "What Is Wrong With This Picture?" things in the advertisements of the etiquette-books.

"I beg—I beg your pardon!" he mumbled, humbly. "Please, please, forgive me. I should not have spoken like that."

"You should! You should!" cried the girl, passionately. "You should have said all that and a lot more. That awful man ruining your record round like that! Oh, why am I a poor weak woman with practically no vocabulary that's any use for anything?"

Quite suddenly, without knowing that she had moved, she found herself at his side, holding his hand.

It was as if all the oaths pent up within his bosom for so many weary days were struggling and jostling to see which could get out first.

"Oh, to think how I misjudged you!" he wailed. "I thought you cold, stiff, ormal, precise. I hated the way you sniggered when you foozled a shot. I see it all now! You were keeping it in for my sake. Can you ever forgive me?"

Chester, as I have said, was not a very quick-minded young man, but it would have taken a duller youth than he to fail to read the message in the girl's eyes, to miss the meaning of the pressure of her hand on his.

"My gosh!" he exclaimed, wildly. "Do you mean——? Do you think——? Do you really——? Honestly, has this made a difference? Is there any chance for a fellow, I mean?"

Her eyes helped him on. He felt suddenly confident and masterful.

"Look here — no kidding — will you marry me?" he said.

"I will! I will!"

"Darling!" cried Chester.

He would have said more, but at this point he was interrupted by the arrival of the Wrecking Crew, who panted up full of apologies; and Chester, as he eyed them, thought that he had never seen a nicer, cheerier, pleasanter lot of fellows in his life. His heart warmed to them. He made a mental resolve to hunt them up some time and have a good long talk. He waved the Grave-Digger's remorse airily aside.

"Don't mention it," he said. "Not at all. Faults on both sides. By the way, my *fiancée*, Miss Blakeney."

The Wrecking Crew puffed acknowledgment.

"But, my dear fellow," said the Grave-Digger, "it was—really it was—unforgivable. Spoiling your shot. Never dreamed I would send the ball that distance. Lucky you weren't playing an important match."

"But he was," moaned Felicia. "He was trying for the course record, and now he can't break it."

The Wrecking Crew paled behind their whiskers, aghast at this tragedy, but Chester, glowing with the yeasty intoxication of love, laughed lightly.

"What do you mean, can't break it?" he cried, cheerily. "I've one more shot."

And, carelessly addressing the ball, he holed out with a light flick of his mashie-niblick.

"CHESTER, darling!" said Felicia.

They were walking slowly through a secluded glade in the quiet evenfall.

"Yes, precious?"

Felicia hesitated. What she was going to say would hurt him, she knew, and her love was so great that to hurt him was agony.

"Do you think——" she began. "I wonder whether—— It's about Crispin."

"Good old Crispin!"

Felicia sighed, but the matter was too vital to be shirked. Cost what it might, she must speak her mind.

"Chester, darling, when we are married, would you mind very, *very* much if we didn't have Crispin with us *all* the time?"

Chester started.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "Don't you like him?"

"Not very much," confessed Felicia. "I don't think I'm clever enough for him. I've rather disliked him ever since we were children. But I know what a friend he is of yours——"

Chester uttered a joyous laugh.

"Friend of mine! Why, I can't stand the blighter! I loathe the worm! I abominate the excrescence! I only pretended we were friends because I thought it would put me in solid with you. The man is a pest and should have been strangled at birth. At school I used to kick him every time I saw him. If your brother Crispin tries so much as to set foot across the threshold of our little home, I'll set the dog on him."

"My hero!" whispered Felicia. "We shall be very, very happy." She drew her arm through his. "Tell me, dearest," she murmured, "all about how you used to kick Crispin at school."

And together they wandered off into the sunset.

HOW I BUILD UP MY PARTS

BY

GEORGE GRAVES RALPH LYNN BILLY LEONARD PEGGY O'NEIL STANLEY LUPINO HUNTLEY WRIGHT BINNIE HALE LESLIE HENSON

In the following article several well-known comedy stars reveal their methods of getting laughs. They explain how they instil into every rôle for which they are cast those touches of originality and personality which have made them popular. Incidentally they relate some amusing anecdotes concerning the introduction of impromptu humour. It is interesting to note how very widely their methods differ.

GEORGE GRAVES.

Who created the famous character of Baron Popoff in "The Merry Widow."

WHEN anybody hands me the script of a new part in a new musical comedy I feel very much like a painter who has been given a blank canvas and instructed to paint a picture. I don't know where to begin.

I am not familiar with the ways of painters, but I imagine that after about an hour's steady mastication of their beards they would run round to their clients and say, "Look here, old man, what sort of a picture do you want?" and in reply they would receive a vague sort of suggestion that perhaps a landscape might meet the case. Similarly, after I have read my "script" (which is usually quite as exciting as reading the advertisement on the back of a tram ticket) I begin to get hold of one or two useful situations which give me ideas for fresh comedy lines and "gags." These I "try out" at rehearsals —an absolute "acid test"—for the man who can make a producer laugh could send the Sphinx into hysterics!

Few people realize how much a comedian's reputation depends upon his ability to build up a part.

When, for instance, a new comedian is discovered in a provincial company people are apt to ask, "Why doesn't he get a part in a West-end production?" In nine cases out of ten the answer is that, although he may be a funny performer, he is not an originator.

Let me plunge into another simile. Humour is a tonic which any well-trained

George Graves—and "Baron Popoff."

man can dispense, but comparatively few know how to make out the prescriptions. It's comparatively easy to be funny with somebody else's material, but to make the material itself is a difficult job. Nevertheless, if the humour in a musical comedy is to be at all spontaneous, it is the performer's place to make it so, not the author's.

When I was first given the "book" of my part in "The Merry Widow" it was so small that the management had the utmost difficulty in restraining me from rolling some tobacco in it and making a cigarette.

But I got the idea firmly fixed into my head that Baron Popoff was rather a gay old dog—one of the has-beens—and the rest came to me, bit by bit, at rehearsals and during the run of the play.

My fellow-actors know my little ways, and always do their best to encourage me. For instance, one night when I made my entrance looking somewhat becraggled, one of the characters thought he'd "draw" me by saying, "Who have you been with?"

Immediately, without further thought, I found myself replying, "My old friend Colonel Moppitt." Now as soon as I had coined that name it seemed to open the idea-box, and I added, "Yes—Colonel Mop-pitt—and my word he *does!*" The audience were good enough to encourage me by laughing at this, and another idea came to me. "Yes," I said. "He pours whisky on his blotting-paper and uses it as chewing gum." They laughed again—and another idea arrived: "Hence the expression 'Blotto,'" I added.

And so I went on. When I get going like this there's no stopping me.

RALPH LYNN,

Of "Tons of Money" fame.

FROM the comedian's point of view, the ideal author for a farce—musical or otherwise—is the one who can write clever comedy situations and mirth-provoking lines which will fit his particular style so perfectly that not a word need be added or altered, and not a single piece of fresh "business" need be introduced before the show is produced. But such an author has yet to be born.

If he is born in my time and starts turning out his masterpieces before I am playing "grandfather" parts I am afraid I shall have to shoot him. He will be too good to live.

Seriously, though, there are limits to an author's capabilities, and comedians have so many personal whims as to how their parts should be played and written that they must be given a certain amount of licence if their performances are to be at all fresh and spontaneous in effect. The funny man who follows the book of a light musical comedy or a farce with parrot-like exactness is almost as bad as the musician who plays his compositions on a barrel-organ.

"Good heavens! What's that? Oh, it's only me!"

I number many authors among my friends, and I must say that they are a kind and considerate race. As a rule they are quite willing to sit at rehearsals and suffer in silence whilst the comedian proceeds to mutilate the children of their brains almost beyond recognition. Occasionally they may heave a sigh and murmur, "Ah, well, I suppose it's for the best"; and if you had ever seen me trying to be funny at rehearsal you would probably sympathize with them.

Take, for example, the highly successful farce "Tons of Money." When I was first shown my part in it, I was full of enthusiasm. It was teeming with funny lines and good situations, but, being a comedian and not an author, I saw the part for which I was cast from an entirely fresh angle. It inspired me with all kinds of new ideas for further scraps of dialogue and pieces of "by-play."

I knew, however, that I was utterly incapable of conveying these ideas to anybody else, so that it was hopeless for me to ask

the authors to make such alterations as I thought might improve the part according to my particular interpretation. So I asked for *carte blanche* to revise the part as I thought fit, and every night, after rehearsal, for two solid weeks preceding the production of the play, Miss Yvonne Arnaud, the leading lady, and I would ensconce ourselves in the stage-manager's room, sometimes until eleven o'clock, scribbling and scratching on the original script.

By the time we had finished with it I began to wonder whether the authors would ever forgive us. But I am glad to say we are still on speaking terms.

As you may know, I specialize in "nervy" parts. I am naturally of a somewhat jumpy temperament, so that this sort of thing comes easy to me. One day I was invited to visit a friend of mine who lived in an old country house which was said to be haunted. He seemed to revel in the idea that ghosts were about, but I simply hated the place. Upon arrival I was conducted by a pale parlourmaid into a musty-looking drawing-room, which was dimly illuminated by flickering candles, and as soon as I stepped through the door I saw a weird, cadaverous-looking apparition coming towards me.

"My God! What's that?" I shrieked. The apparition seemed equally startled at my appearance, for he did likewise. It was then that I realized that I was staring at my own reflection in a long mirror which stood immediately opposite the door.

A few nights later, whilst playing in a dressing-room scene in "Hanky Panky," I was fumbling absent-mindedly with the various toilet requisites on the dressing-table when I chanced to pick up a hand mirror. Glancing into it I instantly recognized my old friend the "apparition," and, quite automatically, I exclaimed once again, "Good heavens! What's that?" Then, with a deep sigh of relief, I added, "Oh, it's only me."

The audience yelled with merriment—and thus, curiously enough, was added one of my most effective contributions to the building up of a part.

BILLY LEONARD.

Principal comedian in "Catherine," "The Last Waltz," and other Gaiety Theatre successes.

I AM not what is called a good "rehearser," and for this reason I fear that I must be responsible for many managerial grey hairs. I hardly ever learn the actual words of the author's script until just before the first night of a play, because I feel that if I were to "study" a part too carefully, reproducing exactly the same movements and inflections at each successive rehearsal, I should very soon become a mere automaton—a ribald "Robot."

On the other hand, I don't think it is fair that a producer should be hampered at rehearsal by a comedian who insists upon going his own way without giving due thought to the performance as a whole. Besides, producers, as a rule, know what they are talking about, and the actor who thinks he has finished learning usually succeeds in proving that he has never learned anything at all. So I make it a rule to do exactly as I am told, and any personal touches I may introduce into the play when rehearsals are finished are always additions, but never alterations.

There is no means of predicting exactly what will make people laugh. Good comedy is essentially spontaneous. Most of my ideas for "business" come to me whilst actually on the stage. Some of them, I confess, have been quite accidental.

For example, in a show called "Soldier Boy" Maisie Gay and myself had a dance which was inserted at the end of one of the acts. At rehearsals we had somehow overlooked the fact that, prior to "striking" a scene, the stage hands always fasten all the doors to prevent them flying open and causing damage whilst the heavy "flats" are being carried about. On the first night we came to the finish of the dance, tripped gaily towards one of the doors to make our exit, and,

to our surprise, found that it was locked. So, still dancing, we crossed the stage and tried the opposite door. That also was locked. We tried hard to force it, but were obliged to give up the attempt and pass on to the next. There were five doors in all, and as we hurled ourselves against each of them without success the laughter of the audience became louder and louder. Finally, just as the stage manager had decided to draw a veil over the catastrophe by ringing down the curtain, one of the stage hands, seeing our plight, suddenly unfastened the last door and we both fell through it precipitately!

"One of the stage hands unfastened the door and we both fell through it precipitately."

The following morning the dramatic critics were good enough to praise the "exquisite comedy" at the finish of the dance—and so, to please the Press and the public, Mr. De Courville, the producer, decided that we should continue to be "locked in" nightly for the run of the piece.

PEGGY O'NEIL,

Who created the delightful character of "Paddy the Next Best Thing."

IF I had been older than I am, I would have been Irish. That is to say, my parents were Irish, but they crossed over to America a few years before I was born. So I am an Irish-American—which, like "Paddy," is the "next best thing." You will realize, therefore, that it is as natural for me to play the part of an Irish girl as it would be for Sir James Barrie to appear as Maconochie.

When I first met "Paddy"—my favourite character—in the script of Miss Gertrude Page's play, it did not take me long to get acquainted with her. After a few rehearsals I came to understand her so perfectly that I knew exactly what she would do or say in any given circumstances.

When I had obtained a thorough grasp of my lines, I put the manuscript aside until the first night of the production. Then I brought it out and propped it up on my dressing-table. Even then I had no occasion to refer to it, but it was a real comfort to know that it was there—something tangible to grasp should I be overcome by nervousness. Honestly, I have quite a sentimental affection for "scripts," and I hoard them as a schoolgirl does her first love-letters—but I am digressing!

Well, as soon as I got into the "skin" of the part, and the play was running smoothly, I began to add a few lines and to introduce little pieces of by-play which had not been rehearsed. Of course, I took care as a rule that these should

be in keeping with the character of a little Irish girl—but one particular night I got excited and made an amusing *faux pas*.

High above the doorway of what was supposed to be my home hung a magnificent pair of antlers. This night, acting upon a sudden impulse, I snatched off my tam-o'-shanter and hurled it up into the air. To my surprise, and to the obvious delight of the audience, it remained suspended upon the majestic antlers! A champion quoits player could not have thrown it better! I was so amused and excited at the discovery of my latent talent as a juggler that I turned to the others on the stage and said, "Sure—did you see that? I'll bet you a nickel I couldn't do it again."

For the moment I didn't realize that I had committed a grave error in making an Irish girl talk about a "nickel"—until a voice from the stalls shouted, "Say, honey, I'll bet you a nickel you could!"

It is, of course, very rarely that a note of pathos is struck by accident. Yet one of the most tense pieces of acting in "Paddy" was also the outcome of an unrehearsed effect. In the scene where Paddy is working in the dispensary of a London doctor there is a great deal of fun and laughter until her lover asks her whether she wouldn't like to be back once more in her old home in Ireland. Paddy's beloved home has been sold, and the memory of it brings a lump to her throat. She makes no reply.

Peggy O'Neil as "Paddy" in the dispensary scene.

Now, when an audience have been laughing and laughing until they are almost hysterical, it is a very difficult thing to pull them up suddenly with a touch of pathos, and for the first few nights I found this piece of acting rather trying. In stage slang, I knew I could "hold" them, but it was difficult to "get" them—to grip their attention and make them feel the sudden change of emotion.

But as soon as I gave up worrying about the technique and concentrated upon making myself believe that I really *was* Paddy, the difficulty was instantly overcome. As the actor who was playing opposite me spoke his lines, I pictured the old home as he described it, and I actually felt a lump rise in my throat. At that moment a large glass bottle I had in my hands fell to the floor with a crash. The effect was almost electric. In an instant the laughter of the audience had given place to a tense silence, and they were in sympathy with Paddy. The crash of the bottle had sobered them—it had made them feel just as I felt, and just as I wanted them to feel.

STANLEY LUPINO.

The Drury Lane pantomime star and creator of many rôles in revue and musical comedy.

WHEN preparing a new show I try, first of all, to bear in mind that humour should be, so to speak, democratic. I do not believe in playing to the gallery—and I believe still less in playing to the stalls. An audience is composed of a varied assortment of people of different classes, but if the spirit of true comedy is to prevail, it should laugh as a body, and not as a number of separate sections.

It doesn't concern me at all whether a

situation, or a sketch, or a piece of dialogue is what some people call "West-endy," or whether it will appeal to "the gods." Either it is funny or it is not funny. Although audiences do vary to some extent in different theatres, a comedian who knows his job and whose performance is clean should—and generally does—appeal to stalls and gallery simultaneously.

But that does not mean that he should either confine his attention to broad knock-about comedy or go to the other extreme by depending entirely upon subtle and witty lines. Rather he should try to strike the happy medium in both directions. Speaking from a purely personal point of view, I have found that a comic fall, if really well done, will extract just as much laughter from the stalls as from the gallery, and that, on the other hand, a really witty line will "get over" to all parts of the theatre. In other words, I think it is best to try to appeal to human nature, and not to try to flatter one section of an audience at the risk of insulting the others.

Strange though it may seem, the first thing I do when I commence to study a new part is to look at the scenery. The "atmosphere" of a particular setting is, to me, far more important than that of the theatre itself. A staircase in a convenient position, a window here, a lampshade there, will give me more ideas than several hours' hard study of the "book." As a slight example of the value of scenery in comedy, I well remember the fun Will Evans and myself extracted from a nursery scene in the Drury Lane pantomime, "The Babes in the Wood," a few years ago. We were the babes, and Lily Long, who played the nurse, was supposed to be putting us to bed. As this little piece of comedy did not take place until the middle of that particular scene, the bed was made up to look as though it were occupied, and there was a hole cut in the scenery beneath the bed (and concealed by the valance) to enable us to make our way into it unobserved by the audience, just before we were due to be "discovered."

"I was standing upright on the bed when I lost my balance and toppled out of the window."

One night, whilst in a particularly foolish mood, I was standing upright on the bed when I lost my balance and toppled out of the window. Anxious not to spoil the end of the scene by such an abrupt exit, I immediately crawled back to the stage through the hole in the scenery. Meanwhile, Lily Long, fearing that I had hurt myself, had rushed anxiously to the window. Her surprise when she turned round and found me lying snugly tucked up in the bed was quite unassumed, and therefore all the funnier. She laughed, Will Evans laughed, I laughed, and the audience yelled. Needless to say, that incident was retained for the run of the pantomime.

HUNTLEY WRIGHT.

Principal comedian at Daly's Theatre.

I SHOULD like to preface my remarks by emphasizing that the plays produced at Daly's Theatre differ from the majority of modern musical comedies in that they do not contain what I call "go as you please" parts. They are, in fact, the nearest approach to light opera we have in this country—with the exception of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas—and they are written and constructed with a great deal of care and thought.

The comedian who is cast for a part in a show of this description must make a really serious study of the character he is to portray or the whole atmosphere of the play will be destroyed.

Extravagant buffoonery and topical references to "Tishy" or "Joe Beckett" may be admirable in a farcical comedy or a revue, but they are entirely out of place in, say, a play like "Madame Pompadour," which is an historically correct representation of life in France round about the year 1760. Just imagine the effect if, after the author, the lyric writer, the producer, the scenic artist, and the costumier have taken considerable pains to study the period in order to be faithful to detail, an over-ambitious "funny man" were to make a *faux pas* and destroy the entire illusion. So I think it is worth while for any performer who really enjoys his work to do his utmost to see that everything he does or says in order to raise laughs shall be "in the picture."

The secret of success in a production of the type likely to appeal to an educated audience is team work. The comedian must realize that the play was not written for him alone—he is only part of the mosaic—and if at first sight his part seems thin and lacking humour, he must remember that the author, who is usually a man of experience, aims at the general effect, balancing one character carefully against another. The performer who wants "all the fat" is like the football half-back who wants to do the centre-forward's job as well as his own. He spoils the game. Therefore, when I am given the "script" of a part, I study it carefully and endeavour to soak myself in the atmosphere of the play. Any additions or alterations that may be necessary are only made subject to the author's approval. When preparing for the *rôle* of a Chinaman in "San Toy," I spent several hours each day at the Chinese Legation for nearly a month in order to understand the character, his clothes and his mannerisms. Although I have, in the past, played many parts in which broader comedy was essential, I cannot say that I have enjoyed them nearly as much as those which have given me an opportunity for careful character study.

As Calicot in "Madame Pompadour."

My devotion to detail has often been the subject of good-natured chaff from my fellow-actors. Quite recently a friend who had seen me in "Madame Pompadour" thought he had "caught me out" because I had introduced into my part a reference to the "Hallelujah Chorus," which he imagined to be a comparatively recent composition. Subsequent research revealed that "The Messiah," of which the chorus is a part, was written in 1741 — when

Huntley Wright in private life.

Madame Pompadour was twenty; so I won my bet.

Again, it is important that a comedian's make-up should be put on properly. To my mind, a badly-fitting wig or any other fault that emphasizes artificiality destroys the illusion. Although my make-up is not in any sense an attempt at disguise, I like to feel that it is convincing. I do not want the audience to say to one another at my first entrance, "This is Huntley Wright." I would rather they regarded me as Calicot, the Poet, or whatever character I am playing. In other words, when portraying a character *rôle*, I try to convey not my own personality, but that of the character for which I am cast. Therein lies the subtle difference between the comedian and the humorist.

BINNIE HALE.

Daughter of Robert Hale, and now a talented star in her own right.

DURING the first few years of my stage career I was privileged to work under the expert guidance of the late Sir Charles Hawtrey and other past-masters of dramatic technique. Naturally, I was so absorbed in learning what they had to tell me that I did not have much opportunity to think about building up my parts. Nevertheless, as soon as rehearsals were over I began, unconsciously, to develop my own little mannerisms and movements, and it was a great delight to find that I was gradually getting into the way of adding my own "laughs" to the parts I was playing.

In "My Nieces," for example, I was playing the part of a "flapper" schoolgirl, and there was a scene in which "Uncle" (Ralph Lynn) was supposed to enter the room and discover me writing busily at a desk. One night, just for a joke, I got hold of the scratchiest pen I have ever seen—or heard—and just as Ralph Lynn was about to enter I commenced to scratch away as furiously as possible, making the most appalling noise and setting everybody's teeth "on edge." To my surprise, the sound penetrated to all parts of the theatre, and there came a tremendous roar of laughter. "Uncle" Ralph was rather disconcerted, but his ready humour came to his rescue, and in his typically nervous style he suddenly exclaimed, "Hark! Mice —with clogs on!" That set the audience

Wonderfully made up as Miss José Collins.

In an imitation of Beatrice Lillie singing "Snoops the Lawyer."

Binnie Hale—a studio portrait.

laughing again, and after that the scratchy pen became an important item among the properties of the play.

In revue, of course, one has an even greater opportunity to develop a part—or, rather, several parts—involving careful character study. When I was first rehearsing the part of the poverty-stricken Cockney girl in the Embankment scene from "Puppets," for instance, I pictured the character so vividly in my mind's eye that I knew exactly the clothes she should wear; and I even went so far as to decide that unless I could get a particular style of coat I should never "feel" the part properly. It took several weeks of searching in secondhand clothes shops to find the right coat, but we succeeded at last, and as soon as I put it on I felt as though I had instantly become the character I was trying to portray.

With mimicry it is just the same. I can give a passable imitation of, say, Miss José Collins in my own clothes—but dress me so that I *look* something like her and the impersonation is heaps easier.

Yes, if you ask me what I consider the most helpful item in building up a part, my answer is "Clothes."

LESLIE HENSON,

Of the Winter Garden Theatre.

I AM not, as a rule, what you would call a methodical man. I have upon occasions been caught in the absent-minded act of trying to put my shirt on over my braces. But when it comes to the serious business of building up a part, I am the most systematic soul alive. It may be difficult for you to understand how spontaneous humour can be born of systematic preparation, but I have found by experience that system pays. (Correspondence colleges for courses in comedy please note.)

Yes, there is method in my madness, though some people declare there is madness in my methods. Anyhow, I'll describe them to you, then you can judge for yourselves.

When first I receive the script of a new part I take it home with me and read it in bed. When I have absorbed the details of the plot and made up my mind as to how the particular character for which I am chosen should be portrayed, I sometimes sit down and elaborate the story, developing the fellow's full history from childhood upwards, drawing upon my imagination for his idiosyncrasies and mannerisms until I feel that I know him as a bosom friend. That helps me to ensure that all my "gags" and by-play shall be quite in keeping with the character.

Another evening with the "script" enables me to memorize the salient features of the part, and I am now ready for rehearsals. At rehearsals, provided I am "in the mood," I endeavour to introduce as much spontaneous fun as possible into my work, whilst Mr. Christy, my secretary, dresser, and personal adviser, stands in the wings and makes a note of any new lines I may happen to introduce into the play. From his notes I am able to revise the "book." Instead of scribbling all over the script I now sit down and type out a complete copy of my revised part, which is fitted into a loose-leaf prompt book.

Thus the part is built up day by day, and as alterations and additions are made I re-type the necessary pages and insert them in my prompt book. This continues until the show has been running perhaps a fortnight or more, by which time I am usually fairly satisfied with the part as it stands, and further alterations (except for minor topical "gags") are few and far between. Thus, on the last night of the show my prompt book is as clean and orderly as ever, and, what is most important, perfectly legible. I hope you'll excuse me patting myself on the back about this, but it's the only little bit of system in my muddled life, so I feel justified in letting the world know about it. Incidentally, it may interest you to know that copies of my prompt book are sent out to other comedians who are playing my parts on tour all over the world, so that those who see the touring companies are certain of getting an almost exact replica of the original West-end productions.

"By-play," clowning, silent humour—such as drinking the canary's water or using a loaf of bread as a walking stick—are usually introduced during the run of the show. Which leads me to a true story which I've been bursting to tell you.

When "Yes, Uncle" was first produced, I had a scene with a clever young girl who was then an inexperienced novice, but is

now a famous star. I don't think she'll mind if I tell you—her name is Margaret Bannerman. She had to speak a line, "I am going to buy a petticoat," and one evening, when I happened to feel particularly flippant, I replied, "Petticoat? Certainly, madam; step this way." I then proceeded in dumb show to go through the movements of

This was one of the most successful bits of "business" I have ever introduced, and seemed to tickle the audience immensely. I made a mental note to keep it in the show for the rest of the run.

Judge of my astonishment, therefore, when, on the following night, Miss Bannerman spoke her lines and walked off the

"I then proceeded in dumb show to go through the movements of the typical draper's assistant."

the typical draper's assistant—taking down the imaginary goods from an imaginary shelf, making out an imaginary bill, getting it signed by an imaginary shopwalker, placing it with imaginary money in an imaginary wooden ball and sending it along imaginary wires, *viâ* the dress circle, to an imaginary pay desk, tying up the imaginary parcel, watching the return of the imaginary ball with imaginary change, and so on.

stage! Afterwards I remonstrated with her. "What about the 'selling the petticoat' business I did last night?" I said.

"Oh," she said, with sweet innocence, "did you want to do that again? I thought you were only just fooling."

And she seemed quite surprised when I gently pointed out that "just fooling" was the very thing I was paid to do.

Photographs by Hana, Stage Photo Co., Foulsham & Banfield, Claude Harris, Bertram Park, Dorothy Wilding, Ernest H. Mills, and Navana

THE SINNER

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.

THE porter who handled little Miss Baker's baggage at the railway terminus summed her up with one glance. To him, cynically expert in swift classification, spinster-ladies were sharply divisible into the "'oly terrors" and the "softies." Little Miss Baker, in cotton gloves and a dowdy hat, was quite obviously a "softie." He endured her fussily-reiterated injunctions to be quite sure her trunks were labelled to Chipping Knoxton and not to Lower Knoxton with the prospective consolation of touching his cap and saying, in an aggrieved voice, "What's this, lidy?" to whatever coin she might produce.

But, as he put her into her first-class compartment with a reminder that she should change at Hadworth Junction, even his hardened effrontery failed to query the tip she gave him. He went off, crediting her with a generosity of spirit that was, in fact, undeserved; Miss Baker was still thinking in terms of the five-franc and ten-lire notes extorted from her by a long succession of French and Italian railway servants.

For little Miss Baker was returning from the great adventure of her life. For eighteen months she had been wandering, quite alone, from place to place of France, Italy, and Switzerland; staying, sometimes for months, so long as the mood of sojourn held her, moving on again as fancy counselled. The retrospect of it thrilled her yet with its incredible audacity.

Miss Baker belonged to that genus of mouse-like spinsters whose age, during most of their life, remains indeterminately between twenty-seven and forty. Actually, she was yet six months from thirty-three. Had she ever acquired the knack of placing instead of jamming the hat upon her head; had she ever purchased her clothes with any other criterion than that of their wearing qualities; had she ever conceived of herself as a young woman upon whom a masculine eye might by any possibility rest with interest; had a benevolent tyrant of a Frenchwoman got hold of her, stripped her to the skin, re-clothed her, taught her to walk as though she had at least an equal right upon this earth—she might have been revealed, to her own astonished reflection in the mirror, as distinctly attractive. There was a candour in her shy grey eyes, a purity of outline in the curve from cheek to chin, a winsomeness in the smile of her sensitive little mouth, a something in the slimness of her figure, that were potentialities masked at the best of times by the drabbling inelegance of her attire and the wispy untidiness of the fair hair that escaped from its screwed-up bunch. As, demurely, diffidently but courageously, she "did" the sights, the kindest of those who noticed her called her "quaint." And so it happened that, after all that long journeying, she returned as friendless as she had started.

In that second-class hotel at Perugia, indeed, there had been a pathetic little middle-aged man, shyer even than herself, who, after much clearing of his throat, had ventured on a remark about Raphael's Fresco and then, emboldened, had suggested a walk to see the sunset-view from the Frontone Garden. He had left next day, and that had been her nearest approach to any intimacy of companionship.

In Paris she had sat innocently at the outside tables of boulevard *cafés* and watched the unceasing stream of humanity flow past, as unspoken-to as though she were in solitude upon a river-bank. In the Bois de Boulogne she had hovered shyly

Copyright, 1924, by F. Britten Austin.

outside the railings of the Pré Catalan and caught a glimpse of beautifully-dressed girls and immaculate young men dancing to a strident, clashing, weirdly moaning music beyond the umbrella-shaded tables crowded with equally elegant men and women chattering over afternoon tea. At Montreux the lake-steamer had been invaded by a swarm of young people returning from a tennis tournament, blazers and white flannels mingling with white knee-short frocks and fillet-bound pretty heads, laughing and joking together in happy confidence that the world was made for them, from whose propinquity she had unaccountably slunk away to the second-class. In Venice, sitting in her gondola, she had seen the other gondolas glide past, each with its pair of lovers lazy in the cushions. In Florence she had come upon, with a peculiar little shock, honeymooners furtively squeezing hands in a pretence of looking at the pictures; in Rome she had looked away awkwardly from the arm-embraced couples going dreamily in the twilight to the balustrade of the Pincio Hill, had renounced, herself, that view across the deep-lying immensity of the city to the misty dome of St. Peter's, and the flashing red, white, and green light distant on the Janiculum.

In general she had avoided such places. Her best memories were those of the vast solitude of Versailles on a Wednesday, of the old-world conical-towered battlements of Dijon, of a little deep-roofed village high up among flower-studded meadows that lapped at the white austerity of the Alps, of the quiet colonnaded antiquity of Treviso, of the uplifted peace of Assisi on a May morning, of the little hotel at Capri when the steamer-tourists had gone and the jingling cab-horses went slowly up the steep hill. The places of fashionable resort afflicted her with a humiliating feeling of exclusion. She had looked at the exquisitely-dressed people unembarrassed upon the terraces of first-class hotels with a curious feeling that either they or she were not real; they belonged to another world—the world of the heroes and heroines of those novels whose perusal led her into day-dreams from which she awakened with a blush. If, setting out, a faint unacknowledged anticipation of personal romance had lurked in her, it had long ago been killed. No one would ever take any notice of her. That was settled.

She leaned back now in her seat, watching the telegraph-posts flash past and the fields pivot upon the middle-distance, wondering, with a tremulous pride in her achievement, what would be her reception in Chipping Knoxton. It might be anticipated that the vicar would invite her to give a lantern-lecture of her experiences, as Miss Smithson had done. Of course, she would refuse! She could not conceive herself standing up on a platform, and, besides, her memories were too precious to be crudely exhibited in public. Even from the prospect of the tea-parties where Miss Smithson, Mrs. Whittinghame, and the other female dragons of the village would hypocritically admire, and secretly be scandalized by, her audacity, she shrank sensitively. But she would have to nerve herself to it. She must take up her life again.

HER mind went back to the inception of her great adventure. It had been on her thirty-first birthday. She had waked up to memory of the anniversary—had shed a solitary little tear as she sipped her bedside tea. There had been no letters on the tray for her. It was absurd, of course; there was no one to write to her—but the sense of isolation had been illogically acute.

She had relapsed back to her pillows, and reviewed her life, past, present, and future. Here in this quiet, ivy-mantled house, where for so many years she had nursed her invalid widowed mother, she would fritter out her existence, uncared for, unimportant, to a lonely old age. She revolted from it, frightened. The mood of revolt was still upon her as she dressed, looked out upon the placid meadows at the termination of the village street. And then suddenly the idea had flashed into her, making her sit down abruptly in the nearest chair, fluttering breathlessly, her heart thumping, as she contemplated it.

Why shouldn't she *do* something—travel? Other women travelled, went almost familiarly to that scarcely imaginable Continent; Miss Smithson, Miss Carruthers, Mrs. Marcourt. Why not she? She had money enough. Her mother had been dead more than a year—she was out of mourning. The project took shape in her, tempting her so that she felt swimmy-headed. Why not she? She surrendered, with a little thrill of fear at herself, overcame the fear with a daring boldness. She also would travel, but she would not go, snubbed and insignificant, with a conducted party, as did Miss Smithson and the rest. She would travel alone, independent, staying where she liked, as long as she liked, going where she liked. She would go at once before resolution failed in her. Trembling at her own audacity, her head sizzling like soda-water in a glass in the excitement that flushed her cheeks, she had rung the bell for Mrs. Harrison, her immemorial housekeeper, had convulsed that portly body with incredulity.

"You don't mean it, Miss Christabel!"

But she had meant it; at a screwed-up tension of resolve had ignored the shocked

It was a baby!

expostulations, the lifted eyebrows, of the elder ladies of the village, had departed, to relax only when the first ordeal of the French Customs had been passed and Amiens Cathedral—she had read about Amiens—was brought into visibility by the alarmingly bumping, swaying train.

And now she was going back, underneath her treasured memories secretly perhaps a little disillusioned. Her heart was still empty. It had no business to ache. She was not one of those for whom the great affair of life had any use. An essential little touch of magic had been left out of her composition.

She duly changed at Hadworth Junction, waited on the platform for the branch-line train to Chipping Knoxton. It came in, simultaneous with another express. In an instant the platform was overrun with a seething, jostling mass of travellers trying to go rapidly in conflicting directions. Flustered by the sudden clamour, by the raucously strident voices of porters shouting strings of stations in a menace of imminent departure as they slammed-to the carriage-doors with unnerving violence, she pushed her way through the crowd and found herself suddenly hoisted by a brusque and harassed porter into an empty first-class carriage just in front of her. A rather nice-looking young woman had the moment before got out of it, carefully closed the door behind her, and then run, as if in great haste, along the platform towards the London express. But Miss Baker did not remember that till later.

At the moment her senses were in a blur from the bustle of that platform and the unexpected man-handling of that officious

porter. She sat down, dizzily, panting a little. Then, as she recovered clarity, she noticed a white shawl lying heaped upon the seat. Someone—that young woman—had forgotten it. She went to pick it up, with the intent of handing it over to the railway officials. To her surprise, the heap was comparatively solid to the touch. She moved it. It was heavy. *It was a baby!* And then, with horrified alarm, she noticed that the train was already moving fast out of the station.

What should she do? There was no corridor, along which she might reach the guard. Pull the communication cord?—or wait till the next station? There were two, widely-spaced, between Hadworth Junction and Chipping Knoxton—Netherway and Princes Pelham. At Netherway she would call the guard. She bent down over that white bundle, steadying it with one hand lest the jolting of the train over the points should shake it off the seat, looked down at the tiny face. As she looked, two blue eyes opened in it, its features contorted themselves, and it unmistakably began to cry.

In a spasm of scared embarrassment, Miss Baker sat down and took the bundle on her lap. At the feel of it, a wave of pity almost swamped her acute apprehension. "There, then!—there, then!" she cooed to it. The baby's cry ceased. Its blue eyes looked at her wonderingly. "There, then!" Poor dear little mite! Something surged up from suddenly-opened deeps in Miss Baker's soul. Her hand was trembling as, with a greatly daring forefinger, she scratched lightly on its cheeks, instinctively provoking the smile. Smile the baby did—and at that smile Miss Baker, with eyes that went unexpectedly moist, impulsively bent down and kissed it. Poor little darling!—how wicked to leave it like that!

Her hand touched upon a piece of paper pinned to the shawl. There was writing upon it. She turned it the right way up and read it:—

"*His name is Noel. He is six months old. His next feed is due at four o'clock and it is in the bottle. Be good to him.*"

That young woman must have had some feeling for it, then—but how could she have brought herself to have abandoned her baby? Miss Baker's innocent mind was baffled, not for the first time, by the inexplicability of other human beings. Poor little mite! If the miracle of owning a baby had come to her, she would have died rather than relinquish it. The weight of even this other woman's baby in her arms was a subtle solace to a vague ache in her, never before realized. What would happen to it—the workhouse? Would they be good to him there? And then, as the baby gurgled under the almost automatic caress of her finger-tips on his cheek, smiled, thrillingly alive and human, a startling idea shot through her—as startling as that other idea which had flashed into her eighteen months before. And, as then, she felt herself go alternately hot and cold as she contemplated it. *Suppose she adopted it?*

IT was impossible—mad—*she* with a baby! She trembled as she sat there hugging it, dallying with the temptation. And an alarming imp in herself whispered to her insinuatingly. Why not? There was no clue to the parents. They had abandoned it. No one would ever claim it. She pictured to herself the bleak horror of the workhouse. But that was the right thing to do, of course! And, in instinctive contradiction, she hugged the bundle closer, tremulous with the conflict in herself. Once more it smiled up at her with a happy gurgle. Once more her eyes went wet and, with an irresistible craving for the love of this tiny living thing, she bent down and kissed the little face.

The train stopped at Netherway. The guard passed along, glanced in at the window. She watched him with fascinated eyes, while her dry lips refused to frame a sound. The train moved on again.

The train jogged on through the quiet countryside, but Miss Baker had no eyes for the familiar landmarks. She smiled at that tiny, round-faced morsel of humanity, kissed it, hugged it, kissed it again, in the intoxicating tremor of a committed crime.

Her mind worked feverishly at details of possible installation. She felt for the bottle in the shawl. It was there, full. It would have to be heated, of course. At four o'clock. It was now two. She should be home at half-past—in that quiet, ivy-mantled house where Mrs. Harrison would be awaiting her. She imagined the good soul's horrified astonishment. What room should she put him in? The big one overlooking the yew-shaded lawn at the back. She began to plot out re-arrangements, redecoration lavish in the use of white paint.

The train stopped at Princes Pelham. She shrank suddenly back into a far corner. Coming along the platform was a large figure in black broadcloth that was only too familiar. It was the vicar. Would he, mercifully, pass by? No. He stopped at the carriage-door, threw it open, entered—tall, imposing, blandly benignant. He recognized her at once, shook hands with her, his gaze lingering in surprised curiosity upon that unhideable baby.

"Why, Miss Baker!" he exclaimed, urbanely cordial. "Back again from your

travels? What a long time you've been away, to be sure! How many months is it—six, at least?"

"Eighteen," she said, with the sparse breath left her by a thumping heart.

He settled himself in the opposite corner.

"Eighteen? Dear me! dear me! how time flies! It seems only yesterday since you went." It seemed an eternity to Miss Baker. He unfolded his newspaper, looked at her over the top of it. "And whose very fine baby is that?" he asked, in good-humoured condescension of interest.

She was suddenly confused. If she explained that she had found it on the seat, would he not insist on her handing it immediately to the authorities?—to the workhouse? She might not get it again! She saw herself menaced with an irrecoverable loss. Her arms tightened round it instinctively as she stammered out, with no clear sense of the implication of her words:—

"He's mine!"

The vicar put down his paper with a jerk, stared at her in unaffected astonishment.

"Dear me! dear me!" he said, apologetically. "How exceedingly stupid of me! But you have been away from us so long that you must excuse me. We had not even heard of your marriage, Mrs.—er—Mrs.——?" He finished on a note of interrogation.

It was her turn to look surprised.

"But I'm not married!" she exclaimed.

The vicar stared at her speechlessly. Little Miss Baker—of all people!

And then it flashed on her. She went white, and red again. There was a tumult in her ears. Tell him?—explain everything?—*and risk losing it?* She had the vaguest notions of the legality of her action. And then the Tempter, who, so the theologians tell us, is ever-ready behind our shoulders, whispered to her, with perhaps a Mephistophelean smile and lift of the eyebrows, a desperate audacity. Let him think—let everybody think—that—that something had happened in those eighteen months while she had been away. *It made the baby unalienably hers!* No one would query it.

The vicar found his voice.

"Er—did I understand you——?" he said, tentatively.

Her face was scarlet as she answered.

"I'm not married."

He stared from her to the baby, and genuine commiseration succeeded to his scandalized astonishment. Poor little Miss Baker—of all people!

"Dear me! dear me!" he said. "What a terrible position! But surely the father——?"

She must stop that at once. She could not tell what dangers lay hidden in a well-meaning inquiry into the child's paternity.

"I—I do not know the father," she stammered.

The vicar was a good man and endeavoured to practise charity, but his code was not elastic. He frowned. He frowned again.

"My poor dear child! This is indeed painful—*most* painful! That dreadful Continent! If I could only persuade young people to stay contentedly at home! And now, I presume, you have come back to dispose of your house and furniture and we shall see you no more among us?"

"No," she answered, innocently less bold than she sounded, "I have come back to live in my house."

The vicar's glance almost went hostile before he could control it, worthily, to shocked expostulation.

"But, my dear Miss Baker! You cannot think——! The—the most unwelcome scandal! There is unfortunately a class——" he made a gesture. "But respected parishioners such as you—to whom the village looks for an example!" He could say no more.

Her eyes filled with tears. She held the bundle tightly to her. It was asleep.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I can't help it."

He looked at her severely, shrugged his shoulders, picked up his paper.

"Of course," he said, "if you take that attitude, I'm afraid there's nothing I can say."

She swallowed, forced back the imminent torrent of tears, forced back the almost irresistible impulse to cry out that he was misjudging her, that it wasn't so, that the baby wasn't hers. Something stronger than herself answered for her, frightening her.

"I—I'm afraid there isn't."

THE train stopped at Chipping Knoxton. She descended to the platform, the shawl-wrapped baby in her arms, and passed through a purgatory of astonished glances. There was no one on that platform she had not known all her life. The vicar turned to her as he passed through the ticket-barrier.

"Good afternoon, Miss Baker." To her sensitive ears there seemed almost a pointed significance in his unstressed pronunciation of her name.

The cab for which she had telegraphed was waiting for her outside the station. She went towards it. Behind her, the porter pushing her barrow-load of trunks tipped a knowing wink to the cabman. She just caught his answering grin as she climbed, awkward with her unaccustomed burden, into the vehicle.

The cab rolled off between the green hedges

towards the just-seen end of the village street. She looked down to the bundle in her arms, uncovered its face, gazed at it, kissed it, hugged it up close to her, whispered to it sobbingly, through a burst of tears that could not longer be restrained.

"Baby!—baby mine!—you're mine now—really, really mine—*after this!*"

The baby looked at her with round wondering eyes.

IT was a year later. On the neat evergreen-surrounded lawn behind the ivy-mantled house, in one of the promontories of shade that jutted into the golden blaze of summer sunshine, Miss Baker sat cross-legged upon the turf, playing with a baby that could just run in and out of her arms. The baby's chuckling laugh as he clutched at the untidy wisps of her fair hair mounted to a scream of delight when, with a radiant face, she tossed her head back from him in pretended impotence to escape from his finally achieved grasp. She also laughed, caressingly, merrily, in a spontaneity of simple happiness.

She changed the game, rolled him upon the grass, buried her face in the soft folds of his neck, tumbled him to and fro upon his back with a mirth-arousing hand working its fingers into his plump little barrel of a body, until he almost choked with spluttering merriment. She gave him breathing-space and he sat up again, beseeching her to renew the sport with an intensely earnest attempt at articulation of his first imperfect words—"Mum—mum—mum!—*'gain!*" laughed uncontrollably in anticipation. She obeyed, rolled him over and over, herself on her knees, laughing too, with her face bent down close to his, until the adventurous black and white wagtail on the lawn flew off in sudden alarm at his exultant crow of excessive pleasure and the straw-hatted old gardener, working on the flower-beds beyond the evergreens, ceased his leisurely toil and stood, leaning on his rake, to contemplate them.

They were, in fact, a picture to arrest the eye, an idyll of young mother and child playing as the thought-free animals play in the warm primeval sunshine. Looking herself strangely younger with her flushed cheeks and happy eyes—the most critical would not have given her more than a tousled twenty-five—she pulled the unsatiated sturdy toddler to her lap for a rest commenced yet another game that was already a familiar delight.

"This little pig went to market—this little pig stayed at home——" she began, in her thrilled soft voice, plucking one by one at the little toes square across his plump bare foot. "This little pig ran squealing—*wee-wee-wee-wee-wee!*—all the way home!" And she scurried with her fingers all the way up his body.

He kicked his fat legs in ecstasy.

"Pig-ig—mahtit!" he insisted. "More!"

And once more this little pig went to market.

She drew his head of golden curls close against her, looked into his blue eyes, so bright and alive, so charged with unmistakable, novel, even sometimes rebellious personality, kissed him. She could not have expressed all she felt for him. There were no words for it. Her heart brimmed. He was *hers*. What mattered it that he was not born of her body?—he was born of her soul, born of long years of lonely yearnings, purchased with bitter solitary tears of humiliation, humiliations that bit like acids into her even while she gloried, wickedly, in the equivocation that justified them. They were the price that made him hers.

Mrs. Harrison came out from the house, stood over them, contemplating them, with arms folded over her broad white apron.

"Well, no one can say he isn't a lovely child!" she opined, her matter-of-fact face softening in feminine susceptibility to a beautiful infant, whence-ever it may emanate. It was not the first time she had made this remark; nor yet the thousandth. It had become an habitual comment.

Miss Baker looked up at her as she clasped him.

"Oh—he's lovely!" she exclaimed, ecstatically, "and he's mine!"

Mrs. Harrison frowned involuntarily. Poor Mrs. Harrison! Miss Baker's conscience smote her. Mrs. Harrison could not be expected to approve, had never approved though she had stayed loyally by her from that famous afternoon when consternation had exploded in the quiet, ivy-mantled house. She had been given no explanation, had asked for none. Miss Christabel had chosen to preserve a stubborn silence, and Mrs. Harrison was not one to pry into other people's affairs—not she! But she had—and she had let it be seen—grieved in silence, her pride of respectability deeply outraged. Miss Christabel!—her Miss Christabel!—of all people!

She stood now, pursing her lips together saying nothing lest (as she told herself) she should say something she might regret.

Miss Baker's glance interrogated her.

"Did you want me for anything, Mrs. Harrison?" she asked.

"No, Miss Christabel. I only came out to pick a few raspberries for lunch."

Miss Baker smiled. She and the baby were by no means on the direct route to the raspberry canes. The truth was that

"And whose very fine baby is that?" asked the vicar.
"He's mine!"
He stared at her in unaffected astonishment.

Mrs. Harrison had yielded, as she did a dozen times a day on the flimsiest of pretexts, to the temptation of getting near the baby for a moment. For Mrs. Harrison spoiled him, the maid-servants spoiled him, everybody in that ivy-mantled house spoiled that fascinating, laughing, chuckling, sometimes naughty, inarticulate little mite of humanity that had no right to be there—and Miss Baker had not infrequently to react against the danger with a severity that made her heart ache. He should grow up (she had vowed it in long wakeful watches of the night) the ideal man, courteous, strong, self-reliant, honest, unselfish.

Hers! She had indeed made him hers. Looking back over the past year she marvelled at her own fortitude. It had meant, not once but many times, a summoning-up, from unsuspected reserves in her sensitive soul, of all her moral strength not to blench, not to break down in the social humiliations that were the corollary of the undisputed possession of her treasure. It needed nerve to push the perambulator, as she did push it day after day—for the baby's mind must be expanded by new sights and sounds—through the inescapable length of village street that lay between her and the green lanes, and hear behind her back the scarcely suppressed sniggers of the village people, to meet those highly respectable, primly virtuous ladies who decorated the church on festivals for the vicar, with whom formerly she had been on terms of lifelong parallel intimacy, and see herself passed with a sniff and a cold stare that swept over her. Yet she endured it, endured it at all costs for possession of the curly-headed miracle that crowed at her from the perambulator; underneath the burning scorch of the stigma—and here she knew she sinned—secretly thrilling with the flattery that she—timorous little starved she!—was, with whatever surprise, regarded as woman enough for the sin they imputed to her. People spoke of her now as "*That* Miss Baker," no longer as "That poor little Miss Baker"; she could have imitated the precise tone in which they said it.

For his sake she braved other yet more terrifying ordeals. She had an interview with the registrar; lay awake all one night in cold fright at the penalties for false statement printed on the paper he gave her. She had the baby christened—"Noel Baker"—stood without flinching while the vicar, his lips pressed tight, wrote "Father unknown" in his great book. And, for her private behoof, she went regularly, unspoken-to, a pariah, to church—prayed, in an innocent soul-searching anguish, for forgiveness of that sin of secret exultation in her imputed shame which she could not justify by any code of morals known to her.

She wondered sometimes whether, had she declared the truth, been authoritatively permitted to adopt the baby, he would have meant so much to her—realized, even as she wondered, that he would not have been quite the same, not quite so near and inexpressibly dear. Apart from the ever-present dread of his real parents suddenly appearing even now to claim him, her illegitimate assumption of maternity, for all its bitter corollaries, not only made him unquestionably *hers*; the make-believe, the very scandal she created, was an indefinable stolen satisfaction for instincts fiercely if unavowedly hungry in her, an assertion of feminine, if illicit, triumph against the scorn intangible about the woman unused in the weaving of the web of life. Therein was—and she knew it—her real sin. And she held to it stubbornly, though her conscience beat at her.

THOSE were speculations forced on her out of doors. Secluded with him behind the yew hedges of her house, nothing else mattered. He filled her universe. He plucked her from her thoughts, even as he plucked her now.

"Pig-ig! mahtit!—more!"

She looked into his roguish little face, the little white teeth that had been so troublesome in coming uncovered by the winning smile of his little mouth, the blue eyes under the mop of golden curls glistening as he tugged at her hand.

"Pig-ig! mahtit!—more!—mum-mum-mum!—more!"

He jerked his plump little bare feet at her as he sat.

She smiled at him.

"I'll play pig-wig with you if you say 'Mummy' and not 'mum-mum-mum,'" she said, seriously. "*Mummy!*" She pronounced it distinctly for him.

He looked at her as though he understood.

"Mum-mum-mum!" he tried, earnestly, baffled for the exact articulation of this new word she demanded. He was at that stage in his talk when such few words as he had mastered were achieved capriciously, by happy accident. "Mum-mum-mum! Pig-ig! Mum-mum-mum!" He couldn't do it. He looked pathetic.

She forgave him, chided herself for her impatience. Presently, in good time, he would call her "Mummy"—later, for all his life, would call her "Mother." She smiled at his discomfiture.

"All right, darling. Next time, then—next time you say 'Mummy, please!'—Now," she took up the little foot, and he started to laugh in premature enjoyment, not

waiting for her. "This little pig went to market——"

Mrs. Harrison stood over them again, a basketful of raspberries in her hand.

"It does one good to hear him laugh," she remarked. "Reminds me of my own little Dick," she added, with a sigh.

Miss Baker looked up sympathetically. Mrs. Harrison's Dick had been killed in the war.

"Don't," she murmured. "I can't bear to think of such things."

Mrs. Harrison moved her head up and down in the gravity of abiding sorrow.

"Ah," she said, "they come and they go—and so we all do, I suppose, all of us." The good soul was in a mood for gossip. She paused for effect. "There's that poor Miss Anderson up at the Manor—she's dead, as I suppose you've heard."

"No," said Miss Baker, in surprise. "I hadn't heard—I never hear anything nowadays. How sad!"

"Yes. She died the day before yesterday—and they do say that she's left all her money to that nephew of hers—you remember him, Miss Christabel—he stayed at the Manor two or three years ago — Noel — Noel What's-his-name? — Noel Paunceford."

MISS BAKER did vaguely remember him—recalled a tall, manly, pleasant-faced fellow, his personality notably vivid by comparison with the native inhabitants, whom for some months she had seen in and out of the village—had even (now her memory became more precise) met him, cheerfully incongruous, at a tea-party on the vicar's lawn.

"Really?" she said, feigning a polite interest.

"Yes. Won't he be surprised out there in Africa! He went out under a bit of a cloud, you know."

"I didn't know."

"Oh, indeed, yes! They do say his aunt paid his passage out. He'd been getting himself mixed up with some girl over Hammingford way. And old Miss Anderson came down on them all like a ton of bricks."

"And did the girl go with him?"

"Lord, no! And a good thing. It came out, after he had gone, that she wasn't any better than she ought to have been——" Mrs. Harrison stopped abruptly. As she said afterwards to the cook, she could have bitten off her tongue.

Little Miss Baker, however, appeared innocently unaware of how nearly she was touched.

"And what happened to her?"

The housekeeper lifted her broad shoulders.

"No one seems to know. She and her baby haven't been seen for a long time. Some do say she went to London."

The messengers of the gods come in strange and unexpected shapes. Little Miss Baker stared speechlessly at familiar Mrs. Harrison. *Noel*—Noel Paunceford!—she saw again the scrap of paper pinned to the baby's shawl—"His name is Noel"—saw that girl running towards the London train. And the train from which she had descended had come from Hammingford! She got her voice, forced it to steadiness.

"When—when was that?" she asked.

"It was—why, let me see, it must have been just about the time you came back, Miss Christabel. Of course it was! I remember now. People were saying in the village——" She stopped abruptly once more; had very nearly gone on to the disaster of "it never rains but it pours." She changed the subject, for safety. "Well, I suppose we shall be seeing Mr. Paunceford back again in the village now his aunt's left him her property. Funny, isn't it?—that his name should be Noel, the same as baby's—the little darling!"

She bent to chuck him under the chin, and Master Noel turned away his head rebelliously. Mrs. Harrison was all very well when that delightful, closely-intimate person, at whose fair hair he might unreprovedly tug, who to him in every way was all that mother ever is to the child-soul, was not available. He had been waiting patiently, with eyes that turned from one to the other in attempted penetration of their mysterious speech, for this interminable conversation to finish. He could wait no longer. It was time for that game to be resumed.

"Pig-ig!" he said, pulling at his playmate's arm. "Pig-ig!"

Little Miss Baker did not, for the moment, hear him. Her head was in a whirl. Noel—Noel Paunceford!—that was the name which should have been written in the vicar's great book! The housekeeper's large presence, as she vainly tried to cajole a smile from the child, was an oppression. She brought her mind back for a pretext to rid herself of it. She must be alone—think!

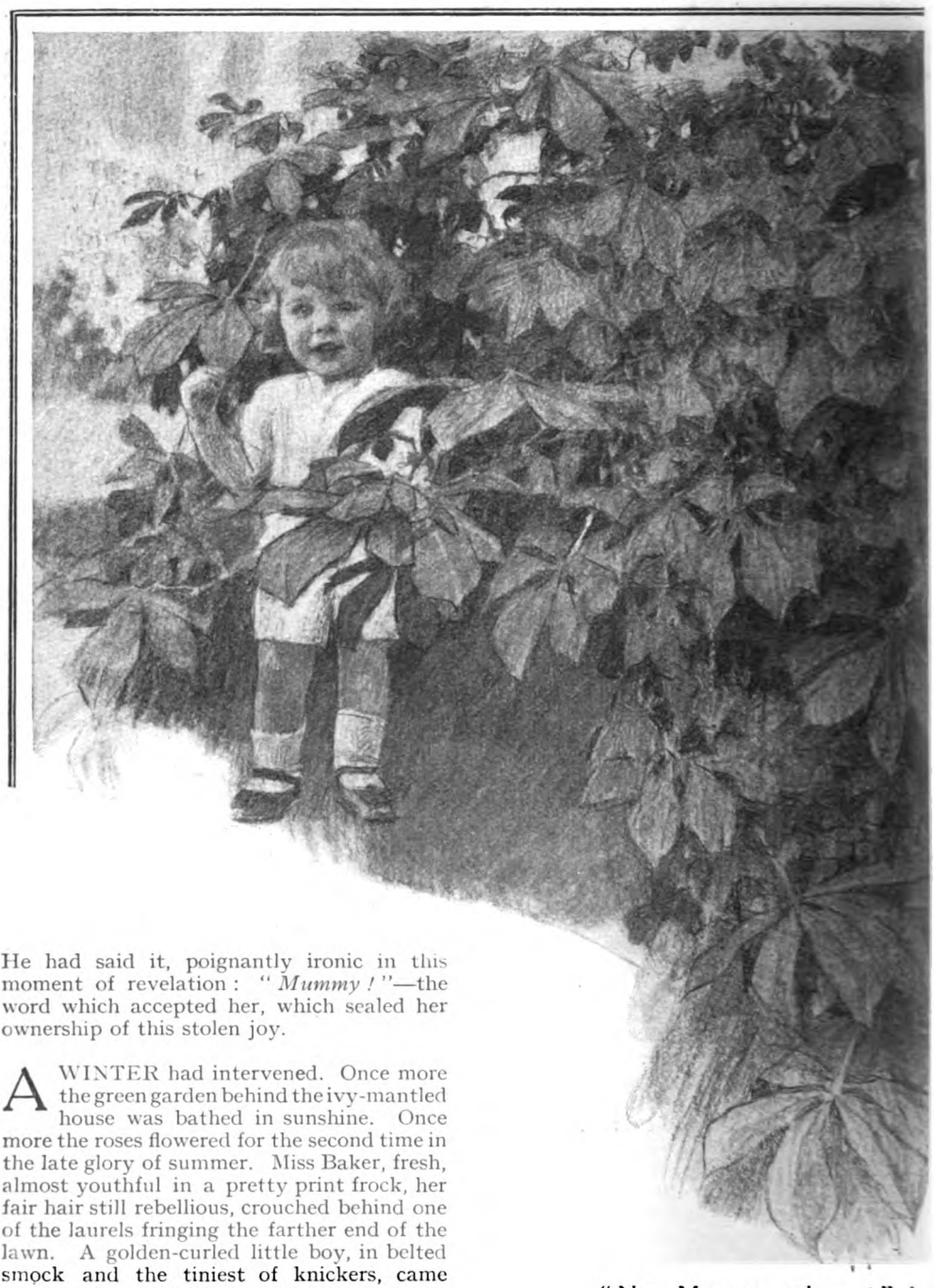
"Isn't cook waiting for those raspberries, Mrs. Harrison?"

The old woman drew herself erect, waddled off with a sniff—she despised jealousy! Little Miss Baker sat nursing the child, thinking—thinking. Noel Paunceford—and that girl in London!

The child tugged at her.

"Pig-ig! Mahtit!—Pig-ig!—*Mummy!—P'ease!*" He reiterated the new word in a pride of achievement. "Mummy! Pig-ig!—*Mummy!—P'ease!*"

She looked at him, clutched him close.



"Now Mummy catch me!" he

He had said it, poignantly ironic in this moment of revelation: "*Mummy!*"—the word which accepted her, which sealed her ownership of this stolen joy.

A WINTER had intervened. Once more the green garden behind the ivy-mantled house was bathed in sunshine. Once more the roses flowered for the second time in the late glory of summer. Miss Baker, fresh, almost youthful in a pretty print frock, her fair hair still rebellious, crouched behind one of the laurels fringing the farther end of the lawn. A golden-curled little boy, in belted smock and the tiniest of knickers, came cautiously, stealthily peering, round the bush, ran to her suddenly in a happy, excited laugh of discovery.

"Mummy!"

She surrendered to his seizure of her skirts, substituted her hands into his warm-fingered grasp.

"Caught!" she confessed, laughingly, breathless still after her last run. "Clever Noel!"

"Now Mummy catch me!" he demanded, imperiously. "Noel hide!"

demanded, imperiously. "Noel hide!"

And hide he did, while, suffering from an extraordinary sudden short-sightedness which failed to perceive a pair of shining-bright eyes glistening at her through the leaves, and a sense of hearing that was deaf to explosive little splutters of mirth from a little face red with its tremendous effort of suppression, she searched for him with a futile, hurrying diligence that passed into high alarm.

"Dear me! Where *has* that boy got to? —I must have lost him!—Noel! Noel!— No!—he isn't here!—he isn't there!—What a terrible thing!—I can't find him anywhere. I must have lost him—I must have lost him for ever and ever! Oh, dear me,

what shall I do ?—I've lost—quite lost—my little Noel !—No use looking any more. He isn't there. The only thing to do is to sit down and cry—I shall never see him any more ! "

And she sat down on the grass, produced her pocket-handkerchief.

He came running out at her, in a mingled exuberant delight at his own cleverness in concealment and genuine compassion for her realistic handkerchief-mopped tears. For a moment he had had a delicious little thrill of fear that he really *was* lost.

" Mummy ! Mummy darling ! Here I am ! Here's Noel !—I'm not lost—I'm not—*weally !* "

But she continued to sob into her handkerchief, deaf to his assertions.

" I've lost him !—I've lost my little Noel ! —Oh, whatever shall I do ? "

He pulled the handkerchief away from her face, snuggled himself into her arms, looked up at her, spoke in serious concern for her.

" Mummy ! — Mummy darling ! Don't cwy !—Here I am ! I'm not lost—I'm not —weally—weally—*weally !*—I won't ever get lost fwom you, Mummy—not ever—ever ! " He was emphatic.

She dropped her handkerchief, revealed a face that was radiant.

" You darling ! " she whispered to him, as she hugged him close. " Promise me that. Promise me you won't ever get lost from me ! "

" I won't ever get lost fwom you, Mummy ! " He pledged himself with all the seriousness in the world.

" It would kill Mummy—break Mummy's heart into little tiny pieces if you were, darling," she said, kissing him, with a gulp of fondness in her throat. The make-believe had, childlike, almost been real to her.

" Were you weally fwightened, Mummy?" he asked.

" Really frightened ! " she assured him.

" Then we won't play that game any more," he announced, magnanimously. " Tell me a storwy, Mummy."

" Mind Mummy's dress, then, with your dirty shoes, and I will," she answered. That dress, surprisingly piquant to be seen on little Miss Baker, was symbolical of much. She had one day in the village, as the two Miss Collins from the Grange had passed her in all the summery elegance of London-made muslin frocks, suddenly realized that she was a dowd. And it would never do for Noel's mother to be a dowd ! She wanted him to grow up loving her, admiring her, never ashamed of her—as she had read in a book that boys at school (and Noel would some day have to go to school) were sometimes ashamed of their dowdily-dressed mothers. She could not start the reform too early. And the very next day little Miss Baker might have been seen, in a pathetic despair with herself, studying the pages of *Vogue* as she had never studied anything in her life. The results had stirred the village to a renewal of excited, mystified whispers. " That Miss Baker—— ! "

The child settled himself down beside her.

" Tell me a storwy, Mummy ! "

She thought a moment.

" An old one—or a new one ? "

Master Noel pondered. Old stories were very good ; it was splendid to know just what was coming, to savour the thrill in advance, to interject—before Mummy had time to pronounce them—the vital words, " *All the better to eat you with, my dear !* " New stories were equally splendid as Mummy told them—one got tremendously excited wondering what *could* be going to happen next. The last story had been an old one. He decided.

" A new one, Mummy, please ! "

" A new one ? Well, wait a minute. I must think of one." He waited, breathless, his eyes fixed on her. She started at random.

" Well, once upon a time there was a princess who lived all by herself in a castle. And every day she looked out of her window to see splendid and handsome fairy princes riding past to call on other princesses who lived in castles close by. But no fairy prince ever called to see this princess."

" Why not, Mummy ? "

" Because she was not beautiful like the other princesses were. But she did not mind this. She never expected a fairy prince to call on her. When she was quite a little girl, a funny old fairy godmother had whispered that no prince ever would, so she was not to be disappointed. But what she did want—more, oh, ever so much more than anything else in the world, was a little baby all for her very own—a baby just like you."

" Like me, Mummy ? "

" Just like you. And so she decided to go wandering all over the wide world to see if she could find one that didn't belong to anyone else." She broke off. The maid-servant was coming across the lawn.

" Please, miss, the vicar has called and brought a gentleman with him."

Little Miss Baker jumped to her feet. The vicar—and a gentleman ! All those fears that had been lulled to rest in her—Mr. Noel Paunceford had not returned to the village, given no sign of life—leaped up in a startled awakening. Not since—since she had come back from the Continent had the vicar called on her. The vicar—and a gentleman ! *What* gentleman ? She stood,

trembling, unable to formulate a clear thought, gripped in an awful apprehension. Should she—she snatched at a floating straw of an idea—should she say she was out ?

Too late ! She heard the vicar's mellifluously cheerful voice, saw him emerge, large and imposing, from the white garden doorway of the house. A gentleman was close behind him. She recognized him, with a memory sharpened by instinct—Mr. Noel Paunceford !

She could not speak, could not move as they came across the lawn towards her. The maid vanished.

" Ah, Miss Baker ! " said the vicar, smiling in that way of his which overbore reluctance in his interlocutor, " we are fortunate. Allow me to introduce——" He turned, with a wave of his white hand, to the tall, bronzed, almost awesomely good-looking man, performed the ceremony. It was, she needed no telling, Mr. Paunceford. " May we sit down somewhere, Miss Baker ? " he continued, frightening her with his imposing cheerfulness. " There is—er—a little matter we want to discuss with you."

Speechlessly, she led the way to some garden seats. They sat down, and the child hid his face from the strangers against her skirts.

" The little fellow is shy," said Mr. Paunceford, awkwardly.

The vicar, smoothly authoritative, took hold of him, patted his curly head, turned him round to visibility, raised his eyebrows interrogatively.

" I think it is," remarked Mr. Paunceford. " There is certainly a resemblance."

Little Miss Baker waited like a victim in the Inquisition, unable to utter a sound.

The vicar turned to her.

" Miss Baker, do you remember my asking you a question in a train a little more than two years ago ? Will you—ah—forgive me if I ask you the same question again ? Whose child is that ? "

The colour rushed up into Miss Baker's face, ebbed, left her deathly white. She could not utter more than one difficult monosyllable.

" Mine."

She steeled herself to face the vicar's sharply penetrative eyes. To her simple soul, schooled from childhood in an unquestioned faith, he was awesome in all he symbolized. She faced him as she would have faced the Judgment Seat. He spoke gravely, but not unkindly, shaking his head, a look in his eye she could not quite gauge.

" Miss Baker, your sin has found you out. It is useless to persist in it. You found that child in the train just before I met you. We have traced it all out."

She sat speechless.

" ' Thou shalt not steal,' Miss Baker."

A cry broke from her deathly pallor.

" I *can't* give him up ! "

The child looked up at her from her skirts, in concern at her dimly apprehended trouble.

" Mummy ! "

The vicar rose from his seat.

" Miss Baker, it is not for me to dictate what must be done. I am going to leave you with Mr. Paunceford. Between you, you can discuss it." He held out his hand. " For myself, I will only say this. You have made me feel ashamed."

She stared at him blankly, watched him go across the lawn.

She was left alone with that bronzed, handsome man, who fidgeted awkwardly in his chair. Neither of them spoke. The child hid himself in her skirts ; then, emboldened, half turned to glance shyly at the stranger. Noel Paunceford reached out a hand for him, drew him close, looked into his blue eyes, put a kiss upon his mop of golden curls. Miss Baker quivered.

The man spoke.

" I suppose I had better tell you the story," he said. " I owe it to you—and much besides."

She made herself answer.

" As you wish."

HE told her the story, succinctly, without parade of personal feelings—a story of a secret marriage, made in defiance of the relative of whom he was the heir, the marriage of a penniless demobilized officer who could find no work. He told her of his aunt's wrath when he confessed it ; of her proposal, accepted after desperate reluctance, that he should go out to Africa—alone—at her expense, to build up a livelihood and a home. He told her of the diabolic condition of that proposal (she was furious in her hate and scorn of his timid little girl-wife, a shopkeeper's daughter), that the marriage should still be kept secret and that for a year they should be on their honour not to communicate with each other, except through her. Those many letters, full of the agony of inexplicable silences, of the torture of unresolved doubts, from him and from that girl-wife he had found, when he had returned (and, far away up-country in an unsettled part of Africa, it had been many months before the news of his aunt's death had reached him), in Miss Anderson's drawer. To him, Miss Anderson had written—" but what could you expect, Noel, from a girl of that sort ? "—that his wife had fled, not to be traced, with another man. (It was in the anguish of these tidings that he had gone up-country to lose himself in the wilds.) To her, he knew not

The vicar took hold of him, patted his curly head, turned him round.
"There is certainly a resemblance," said Mr. Paunceford.

what she had said—something that drove her to despair.

"Some women," he finished, "though I don't like to say it—can be very wicked, Miss Baker."

"Yes," she assented, meekly, a self-conscious flush stealing into her face.

There was again an awkward silence.

"And your wife?" she forced herself to ask.

"She died in London—a year ago." He looked down at the child, still between his knees. "This is all that is left to me."

She made a movement with her lips, but no sound came.

"Miss Baker," he said, very seriously, "the vicar has told me everything. You have been his real mother."

"*Don't!*" The protest came strangled in her throat.

"I can't snatch him away from you like this——"

She stared at him, rushing waters surging in her ears, her sight useless in a sudden trouble of her eyes, her heart tumultuous.

He paused.

"Miss Baker, I am a lonely man. If I left him with you, would you let me come and see him often—very often? And perhaps one day—when you have learned to know me better—you would let me tell you something of the great—the very great—admiration the vicar's story has made me feel for you—the admiration of a very poor sort of fellow for a woman of very rare and beautiful goodness."

He stood up, patted the child upon the head.

"Good-bye, little Noel—for a time. Is it a bargain, Miss Baker?"

She looked into his honest, handsome face, tried to speak, and failed. She wanted to throw herself at his feet in overwhelming gratitude.

He took her hand, held it with his firm clasp.

"I know it is," he smiled at her. "*Au revoir*, then, Miss Baker."

She watched him go across the lawn, disappear. She was alone with the child.

"Mummy," he said, tugging at her. "Mummy, I want to hear that storwy. Mummy!—Mummy dear!—Why you cwying, Mummy?"

She came down to him, clasping him passionately, smiling at him through her rush of tears.

"Noel! Noel darling! Mummy thinks that story was all wrong! We—perhaps we'll begin another one."

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 130.

(The Second of the Series.)

THE winter of our discontent is past;
The first is here, with promise of the last.

1. 'Tis on the river, therefore should be clean,
   Though, judged by sound, discoloured spots are seen.
2. Strange is this liar; half a word we view;
   Mix up the letters would you find the hue.
3. Take one of twelve, a butter you will find,
   Which, with a rod, a charger brings to mind.
4. The fruit was given, peace to war gave place,
   Burnt were the topmost towers by Beauty's face.
5. One letter, then it must be many more;
   Nevertheless, it must be letters four.
6. White-feathered one, he wandered manywheres,
   Not only up, but also down the stairs.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 130 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on May 10th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 129.

IF flowers may their seasons represent,
Winter and spring should here be evident.

1. Between the cup and lip this may occur.
2. The month when fogs oppress the Londoner.
3. Rising, the east. Write only half the word.
4. It turns at last, caught by the early bird.
5. Golf club, or player, offers you a ride.
6. In Shakespeare's play, he and his lady died.
7. Horrible monster, eight-armed cuttlefish.
8. September brings the bird—a welcome dish.

PAX.

1. S	li	P
2. N	ovembe	R
3. O	r	I
4. W	or	M
5. D	rive	R
6. R	ome	O
7. O	ctopu	S
8. P	artridg	E

NOTE.—Light 3. Orient.

THE HUMOURS of DANCING

BY

Fenn Sherie

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE PARTNER WHO WON'T KEEP STEP.

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

TO the modern youth and maiden mankind appears to be divided into two categories—those who dance and those who criticize dancing. Each section is apt to regard the other with mild disapproval, and it is only when the humorists present an impartial view of them both that we realize the value of laughter as an antidote to misunderstanding. To whichever section we belong we cannot fail to appreciate the humour of those who satirize dancing and its critics, and we must be grateful to them for enabling us not only to see ourselves as others see us, but to see others as we ought to see them.

A BALL-ROOM NECESSITY.

The periscope attachment for partners of ill-assorted heights.

By permission of "London Opinion."

When those energetic bodies who write to the Press signing themselves "Paterfamilias" or "Disgusted" indite their protests against the manner in which certain young ladies deport themselves in the ball-room, indignation arises on both sides. But the kindly humorist takes the milder view, and pours oil

THE DANCING LESSON.

Exasperated Wife: "My dear man, you learnt to drill in the Army; why can't you pick this up? Anyone would think you were mentally deficient."

Husband: "Almost the sergeant's own words, dear."

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

on the troubled waters by suggesting that the poor girl may be "more danced against than dancing." The truth is that Miss 1924 is not so bad as she is painted—painted though she may be.

The next thing that the humorist teaches us is that the languid walk and the casual gliding movement which devotees of Terpsichore are pleased to call the one-step and the fox-trot are far more difficult than they look. They take a lot of learning. Indeed, it may be said that the modern dance is a paradox—in the first place it is not a dance, and by the time you have learned it, it is no longer modern. It has, however, certain advantages over the old-fashioned figure and set dances, in that every couple is free to perform whatever movements it happens to prefer. Of course there are—and always will be—dancers who go to extremes in this respect, being unable to distinguish between individuality and selfishness. If people like to be eccentric and dance *against* the rhythm of the music, as many of the up-to-date dancers do, nobody wishes to interfere with them. We are content to watch them with mild amusement, and reflect how true to life is the story of the young dancing man who said to his partner, "I say, old thing, shall we one-step or fox-trot this waltz?" But those who slither about the room in all directions and collide with other couples in their attempt to display their originality only succeed in causing general annoyance. As a wit was once overheard to remark, "They are all right in their way—but not in other people's."

It may not, perhaps, be generally realized that, although the great revolutionary change from the old-fashioned dances to "jazz" took place during the war, there have been still further changes in "jazz" itself during the past few years. The noisy and cacophonous negro bands have been superseded by those who mingle sweetness with syncopation and humour with harmony. The ugly movements of the "bunny hug" and "shimmy shake" have given place to the more decorous steps of the "blues," and the waltz—with modern variations—has returned to popularity.

There was a story told during the "cymbal and trombone" era of a nigger performer in a jazz band who, at the end of

THE SUPER-STUNTERS.

By permission of "The Sketch."

a dance, laid down his trombone and remarked to the conductor: "Say, bo, they sure enjoyed that 'Farmyard Fun' we just played."

"'Farmyard Fun'?" exclaimed the leader. "Why, that's the next item—we ain't played that yet."

"Oh," answered the other. "Jest fancy—I've been playing it all the time."

Dutiful Son of the House (who has been told off to ask a Wallflower to dance): "I say, how shall we—I mean, how do people usually hold you?"

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

DEDICATED TO "CHERUBS" UP ALOFT!

One man's floor is another man's ceiling.

By permission of "The Sketch."

A more recent story is that of the dancer who approached the leader of a syncopated orchestra and said: "I say, do you know that thing that goes 'Zammy zammy zim zim *zig* zag'?"

"Can't say I do," replied the musician. "What's the name of it?"

"That is the name," was the reply.

Now that eccentricity in the ball-room is the exception rather than the rule, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and the humorist is beginning to aim his shafts of wit at the lack of energy and the utter boredom affected by the dancers of to-day. He shows us that they take their dancing as they do their tennis or their golf—with contemplative seriousness. They regard it as an exercise or as an art, according to their temperaments, and, despite what the kill-joys may say, the ball-room is no longer regarded as the ideal setting for a mild flirtation. Dancing partners are selected, not for their personal charm, but for their skill as dancers. Te.psi-

TO MEET THE SHORTAGE OF DANCING MEN.

THE SERVANTS' BALL.

Groom (somewhat heated): "Care for a breather my lady?"

Drawings reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

chore and Cupid are as a rule kept in water-tight compartments.

Relevant to this is an anecdote which tells of a hostess at a house party who found her daughter sitting out on the stairs with a young man.

"Why is it that you are not dancing, dear?" she asked.

"I can't, mother," was the reply. "My dancing partner hasn't turned up. This is only my sitting-out partner."

And, as a reflection upon the attitude of the ultra-modern youth to his fair partners, there is the story of the languid young man who was found lolling in an arm-chair airing his views to several youngsters of his own age.

"What do you think is the best way to hold a girl?" asked one.

"Oh," replied the tired one, "I don't hold them, you know—I just let 'em nestle."

The humorists have not overlooked the popular craze for tea and supper dances as a subject for their fun. There is a ring of truth in the story of the lady at the "*souper dansant*" who, when claimed by her partner for a dance, replied: "I'm so tired. Do you mind if we eat this out?" and a clever touch of

HINTS TO HOSTESSES: HOW TO DEAL WITH INCORRIGIBLE SITTERS-OUT.

Install a moving staircase which you can operate at your discretion.

BRIGHTER BALL-ROOMS.

The advantage of the winding frock is that it can be secured by a single pin—so long as the pin remains.

Drawings reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

satire is provided by that of the restless young lady who took leave of her hostess at the comparatively early hour of three a.m.

"What—going already?" asked the hostess.

"Yes, dear, I must,"

PITIFUL POSITION OF A GENTLEMAN WHO WENT TO A SUBSCRIPTION FANCY DRESS BALL AS THE BLACK PRINCE.
By permission of "The Humorist"

replied the other. "I'm rather tired, and I've got to be up early for a *déjeuner dansant*."

Finally, there is the more obvious but never-failing topic of the bad dancer, which has given rise to innumerable anecdotes. A classic among these is that of the gallant but slightly deaf gentleman who approached an obese "wallflower" sitting alone in a corner and asked her for a dance.

"Thank you very much," she said, "but I'm afraid I am danced out."

"Oh, no," was the reply. "Not darned stout—just pleasantly plump."

Equally amusing, if less polite, is the story of the compliment that failed.

"You dance divinely," said the young man to his partner.

"Thanks," replied the girl, somewhat cattily. "I'm sorry I can't return the compliment."

"Oh," replied the young man, unabashed, "you could—if you were as big a liar as I am."

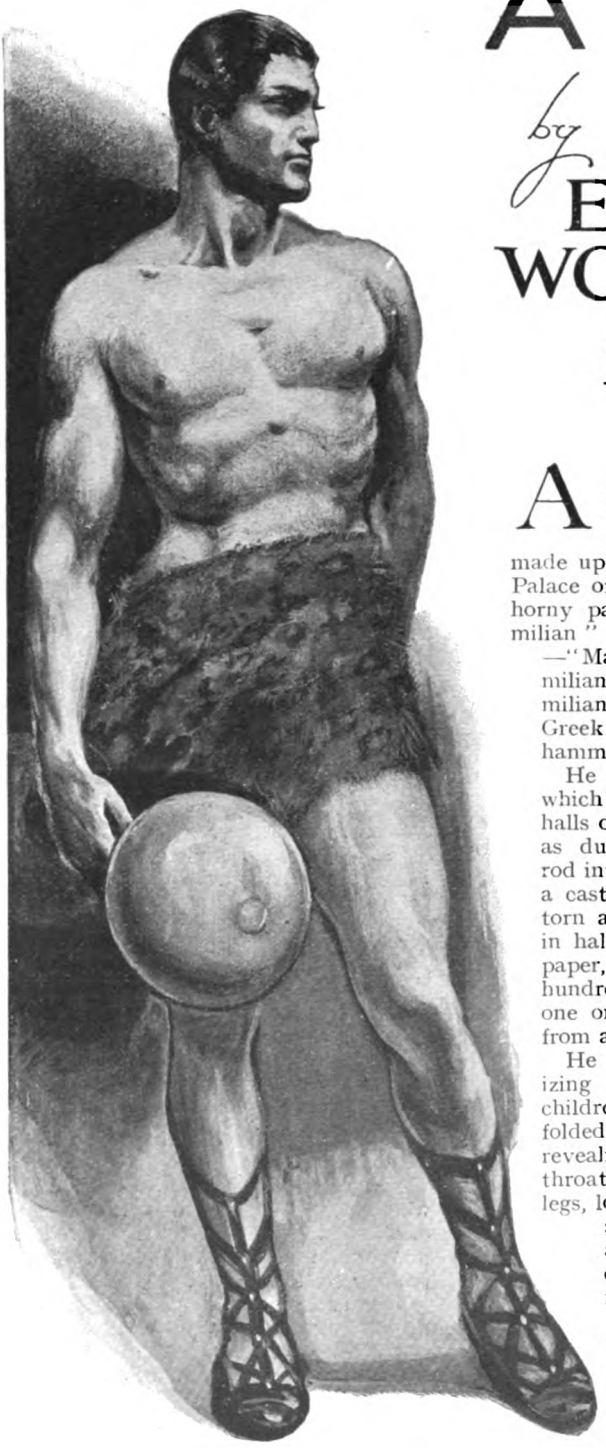
Perhaps the neatest witticism of all, which expresses the unspoken thoughts of most women who have suffered the martyrdom of dancing with a clumsy partner, is the following.

The particularly gawky man was endeavouring to open up a little small-talk with his fair partner.

"What do you think of the floor?" he asked.

"Rather nice," was the reply. "Try it when you are tired of my feet."

Nervous Pierrot (just introduced): "I say, I—I've only been dancing a fortnight, so you will forgive me if I step on your frock or anything—won't you?"
By permission of "The Bystander."



A MAN

by

EDWARD WOODWARD

ILLUSTRATED BY E. VERPILLEUX

I.

A CRASHING crescendo of chords from the orchestra; a deafening wave of amazed applause from the packed and perspiring throng which made up the second house at the East-end Palace of Varieties; and with tongue and horny palm paying him homage, "Maximilian" (Billy Richards by baptismal gift) —"Maximilian the Miracle Man"; "Maximilian the Muscle Millionaire"; "Maximilian, who combined the grace of a Greek god with the strength of a steam-hammer," stood back and smiled.

He had, with the nonchalant polish which had made him famous in the great halls of the West, used two normal men as dumb-bells, bent a three-inch steel rod into a collar round his neck, snapped a cast-iron bar across his flexed forearm, torn a couple of packs of playing cards in half as though they had been tissue paper, and juggled with five half-hundredweight steel balls, finally catching one on the back of his neck as it fell from a height.

He had done all this with the patronizing manner of one "amusing the children"; and now with his arms folded, his head thrown slightly back, revealing the splendour of his neck and throat; the symmetry of his torso and legs, looking under the "spot lime" like some wonderfully tinted statue of ancient Greece, he gazed into the clamorous darkness beyond the footlights.

"How the herd worshipped him! He was the man to get the strong stuff across to them! He was the man to make them yapp!" thought Billy Richards, who had started life as a newsboy. "What a king amongst

AND A MOUSE

commoners! What a lion amongst the other denizens of the city jungle!"

He had feared he might lose caste, coming to this little suburban hall during a period of slackness. But now he knew this applause was worth any risk he had taken; it went to his head, and he loved it as other men do wine; and, stepping forward, he made his bow. He had studied and practised that bow as assiduously as he had any other of his "stunts"; and, perfected, it seemed somehow, not at all clearly to Billy Richards' limited intellect, to crystallize his achievements, his rise from news-lad to docker, from docker to strong man at a circus, and thence by hard paths to his present supremacy, into one marvellous moment of monarchy.

With a hand-spring he left the stage, and fetched up in the wings in front of Mallox, the paunchy and black-avised manager of the hall.

"Lord, how they eat you!" said Mallox, with a faintly veiled sneer in his voice. "They're for brawn rather than brain every time!"

Bemused by vainglory, Richards missed the disparagement in the manager's words. Almost humorously he swelled out his chest and laughed.

"That's right," he answered. "I guess they'll be making pilgrimages to my resting-place when I pass out."

"Do you?" grinned Mallox. "Then you've another guess coming. They'll forget you long before you're dead. You're just in the fashion now. Wait until you begin to crack, or get hurt, and they'll give you 'the bird,' same as they gave it to 'Bang' Thomas, your man."

"Don't you kid yourself," returned Richards, getting into his purple silk dressing-gown. "Thomas never had balance. He got swelled head, and drank himself off the boards. I gave him the job as my assistant out of pity, and wish I hadn't. Even as my handy man he's getting too big for his boots."

Mallox chuckled, and puffed at his cigar. Almost unconsciously his eyes went to Richards' sandalled feet.

"You take a fair size in footwear yourself, don't you?" he murmured.

"But they don't pinch," replied the great "Maximilian," moving off towards his dressing-room. "I don't drink and I don't smoke; and if you know of a man who can do my turn better than I can, you'd better get him."

"Aw, cut it out!" snapped Mallox. "I ain't a worshipper of idols myself, and you'll catch a chill if you hang about like that, even if you do fancy yourself a god."

Reaching his dressing-room, Richards saw his man, "Bang" Thomas, stowing away his stage paraphernalia; saw that, as usual, he was half fuddled; and with a smile on his lips strode across to the full-length

mirror, shed his dressing-gown, and flexed his great biceps and deltoids; half turned on heel and toe and, bringing his clenched fists backwards, regarded the undulating might of his massive back; turned this way and that, dead to everything but the worship of his own wonderful body.

What cared he that Mallox and the theatre staff called him "The Swanker"? He had a right to swank if anyone had! What cared he that his drink-sodden assistant, "Bang" Thomas, a one-time strong man, regarded him with sullen animosity? That dead-beat had lifted the spirit flask so often that he couldn't lift a real weight once; whereas he, "Maximilian the Marvellous," was supreme in his line.

Getting out of his leopard-skin loin-covering, rubbing down, and dressing for the street, Richards mentally attributed to himself all credit for possessing the frame he did, and turned intolerantly on "Bang" Thomas when the fuddled handy-man allowed one of the heavy steel balls to fall.

"Lord!" he shot out disdainfully, watching Thomas sway into a stooping position to retrieve the fallen weight. "It makes me giddy to watch you! You'll have to let up on the fire-water, else you'll find yourself out of a job."

Thomas looked up, his eyes narrow slits of fuddled anger. He had always regarded Richards as a usurper; but now, with his brain inflamed with raw spirit, with the thunder of applause that "Maximilian" had aroused still ringing in his ears, venomous hate gripped his tattered soul.

"Who are you abusing?" he grunted. For a moment he stood bent, his once massive form sagging, his arms, once the envy of other strong men, hanging ape-like, limp and flabby, in front of him. His heavy brows were bunched above half-vacant, half-ferocious animal-like eyes. "You think as you're the whole world because you've got a bit of strength; but you wait! Some day it'll go, and then——"

"That's enough," cut in Richards, as the sot before him voiced the dread of all strong men.

Thomas chuckled; his laugh was a threat.

"Oh, no, it ain't enough," he sniggered. "I've had a fill-up of your airs of late, and now you've got to listen to me—me, who was getting the strong-man stunt across whilst you was still sucking a bottle."

"Stow it!" snapped Richards, rising to his feet. "It's you who suck a bottle now; that's the difference. If you don't want to take orders from me, you can hop it."

With a shambling gait Thomas came up to his employer, an insane fury leering from his eyes, his fists clenched, his head bent, his whole attitude one of menace.

"You firing me?" he gritted.

For a tense second Richards made no reply. He was loath to fire this poor devil into the ranks of the unemployed; but he could take him on again afterwards, and a jolt would maybe do him good.

"That's it," he said. "A drunken dead-beat ain't any good to me."

"Then take that for a keepsake!" snarled Thomas, and, swinging back one of his fists, he levelled a blow at Richards' head.

Just in time "Maximilian" ducked his Greek profile out of harm's way; and the next second, as Thomas, carried off his drunken balance by the swing of the blow, tottered forward, he caught him by the scruff of the neck and the seat of his breeches, hoisted him off his feet, and, carrying him to the door, pitched him out on to the landing.

Thomas lay still, breathing heavily; and with a grin Richards turned, switched out the dressing-room light, locked the door, and strolled down the stone stairs to the exit. That was the way "Maximilian" dealt with truculent servants! And although Thomas, rousing himself, yelled a threat after him: "Cripes! You shall pay for this!" he approached the stage-door-keeper's office with a self-satisfied smile.

"Mike," he said to the man in the little glass cupboard, "I've fired that dead-beat, 'Bang' Thomas. He's lying upstairs on the landing in a booze-trance."

Mike O'Tool nodded his head.

"He's bin asking for it for some time, Mr. Richards," he said. "But I'm sorry for the chap."

"So am I," agreed Richards. "I've stood his drinking for some time; but he's getting dangerous now, and I'm through. Here's my key; hang it on its hook, and if he asks for it don't let him have it. And here's his wages and a bit for luck; give the dibs to him to-morrow when he's sober."

He handed the doorkeeper a wad of notes, and with a cheery "Good night" stepped out into the dark side-street.

KIPPER ALLEY, the thoroughfare which runs up alongside the East-end Palace, is an unsavoury spot at any period of the twenty-four hours; but as "Maximilian" stepped from the stage door it was at its worst. The pale gleam of light which came from the theatre only served to reveal the neglect of the city scavengers, and the dilapidation which rain and wind had caused to the posters on the hoarding across the way.

A bitter, blood-freezing east wind swept up from the broader street which ran at right-angles to the left, eddying torn and discarded programmes, straw, and grit;

and, raising his coat-collar, Richards had taken one stride to the left when his leg came into violent contact with something soft and yielding.

At the same time a gasp came from the darkness at his feet, and something black rolled into the gutter.

Startled, Richards halted.

"What the blazes?" he commenced, and then stopped short, for the black thing which his leg had sent hurtling into the gutter materialized into a being!

Peering into the gloom, increased rather than lighted by the dim shaft from the stage door, "Maximilian the Superman" beheld rise up before him as monstrous a dwarf as ever parodied the form of man! A crooked, stunted caricature of the lords of the animal kingdom, which cringed before the perfect specimen of his race, like a horrible reflection in a bent mirror.

"Heavens!" gasped Richards. "And who the blazes are you?" Almost unconsciously he drew himself to his full magnificent height, swelled out his massive chest, and lauded himself for being as he was. "What in thunder is your name?"

The dwarf looked up, a crucified smile appearing on his large grey-white face.

"Hercules, guv'nor," croaked he. "When me dad knowed I was going to be a dwarf, he had me christened Hercules, so as I'd be able to make folk laugh an' earn a living that way."

Some fund of hidden sympathy stirred in "Maximilian" as he listened to that crushed voice. Some recollection of his own early struggles with hardship and want made him momentarily humble; but the next second the old arrogance assailed him again. What a wonderful contrast was here! Himself, perfection; the dwarf, parody! Instinctively he struck an attitude, and spoke in a patronizing voice.

"Hercules, eh?" he chuckled. "Wonder he didn't call you Adonis whilst he was at it. What d'you do for a living?"

The dwarf shivered in the cutting wind, and stamped one stunted leg.

"What can a bloke made in the way I am do, guv'nor?" he asked, dragging his tattered coat about him.

"Well, what are you doing here, anyway? Who're you waiting for?" inquired Richards.

"You!"

Speaking, the dwarf peered up into the Superman's face hungrily; something almost akin to adoration in his eyes. "I seed your picture on the hoardings, and come to have a look at you in the flesh. I couldn't afford to have three-penn'orth in the 'gods,' but I guessed I'd catch you comin' out if I waited long enough! I wanted to see what I might have been like if I hadn't been as I am."

A warm wave of self-complacency flooded through "Maximilian the Miracle Man." At that moment he felt himself more than ever a god whom ordinary mortals worshipped.

"What good does seeing me do you?" he asked, eager for more praise, even from the dwarf's humble lips.

"As much good as a famished kid gets from squashing his nose against a bun-shop window." Abruptly the dwarf broke off and gave utterance to the abortion of a laugh. "What a picture you and me must look at this minute; you so big and mighty, me a perishin' gargoyle, chatting as familiar as ever was: 'Maximilian' and Hercules Spicer; the long and the short of it!"

Into Richards' vainglorious brain those words shot like flame. What an idea! What a brain-wave for a Press stunt! This dwarf's warped frame would give his own magnificent physique an added wonder! But they would have to be connected in some way. How? And then came the idea. As his servant, in place of "Bang" Thomas! It almost looked as though poor Thomas's actions had been dictated by Fate. Abruptly he decided.

'If you want a job I can give you one," he said. "I'll give you a trial as my servant; and you'll have to be seen about with me."

The dwarf took a shambling step forward, and touched "Maximilian" with a grimy, talon-like hand.

"Am I hearing you right?" he quavered.

"Yes," said "Maximilian," in the tone of a Nero granting the boon of life to a vanquished gladiator. "I have need of you—follow me to my lodgings."

With that he turned on his heel, and with a sort of shuffling trot Hercules Spicer followed at his heels.

A quarter of an hour later the two stood in the sitting-room of Richards' lodgings.

"Lord!" gasped Hercules, gazing round, and then grinning up at the wondrous "Maximilian." "All the way here I've bin wondering what you wanted with me; I've just tumbled to it. I'm to be the contrast! The advertisement to show what a great fine figure of a man you are."

"That's right," said "Maximilian," "but you've got to be my servant as well."

"Lummy!" breathed Hercules, in an awe-inspired voice. "Fancy me being gentleman's gentleman to a giant!"

II.

THE next twenty hours was to "Maximilian" a period of interested satisfaction, and to Hercules Spicer one of amazed delight in his own good fortune.

Providence having endowed the dwarf with a quick and adaptable brain, he readily picked up the rudiments of his new duties; and a theatrical tailor, accustomed to making the best of what the Lord sent him in the way of figures, fitted him out of stock with raiment which in its very conspicuous restraint called attention to the stunted figure of the servant, thereby throwing into bold relief the godlike stature of the master.

Together they walked from lodgings to theatre; "Maximilian" with a haughty, swaggering stride; Hercules with a sort of waddling shuffle. It was a wondrous advertisement for the "Muscle Millionaire."

But at the theatre there was trouble from the start. Much to "Maximilian's" annoyance, Mallox, on hearing of "Bang" Thomas's dismissal, had championed the dead-beat and taken him on as a scene-shifter and property man, which, whilst being a job, was a very much harder one than that of servant to a pampered "star turn," and one which Thomas had no intention of putting up with without having a shot at regaining his old billet. The appearance of the dwarf therefore infuriated him; and just as the "second house" was commencing on the evening following his dismissal, he went to "Maximilian's" dressing-room and asked for his job back.

Hercules was busy getting the paraphernalia ready for his master's second "turn"; and, knowing facts, looked up with a grin as "Bang" entered and voiced his supplication to "Maximilian." It was joy to him to know that he, a dwarf, had beaten a man of normal stature.

"Sorry, 'Bang,'" said "Maximilian," after hearing his ex-servant's appeal, "but I have a chap now who suits me better than you ever did. What's more, he's a 'dry bone,' and I have the comfort of knowing that my life don't hang on the strength of the dope in your pocket flask. There's nothing doing."

"Meantersay you won't gimme another chance?" growled Thomas, angrily. "Meantersay you're satisfied with a freak to look after you?" He paused and cackled. "Huh! I guess I see the idea; it makes you feel that much bigger to have a mouse like 'im crawling round yer! Criky, Mr. Umpty Dumpty, you ain't 'arf going to get a fall one of these days!"

"Maximilian" rose to his feet angrily.

"Get outside!" he commanded, threateningly, and although, mindful of his previous ejectment, Thomas obeyed with alacrity, there was a demon of malice in his eyes as he left the room.

Hercules had paused in his work during the altercation, and now, catching his expression, "Maximilian" chuckled.

"Take no notice of him," he said. "He's like the dope he uses, all fumes. If you've done polishing the sweat off those weights you can come along into the wings and watch the show."

EAGERLY the dwarf followed his hero out to the fringe of the stage, and for a space watched Lupo, the funny man, at the business of getting a laugh out of a stolid audience who had come to see a strong man, and were impatient for his appearance.

"Maximilian" watched with tolerant interest; Hercules with wonder and cackling joy. The dwarf loved a funny man of the red-nosed, splay-footed variety; somehow it lessened the consciousness of his own affliction; and so absorbed were both "Maximilian" and he in the "turn," that neither noticed the vulpine eyes of "Bang" Thomas watching them across the stage from the prompt side.

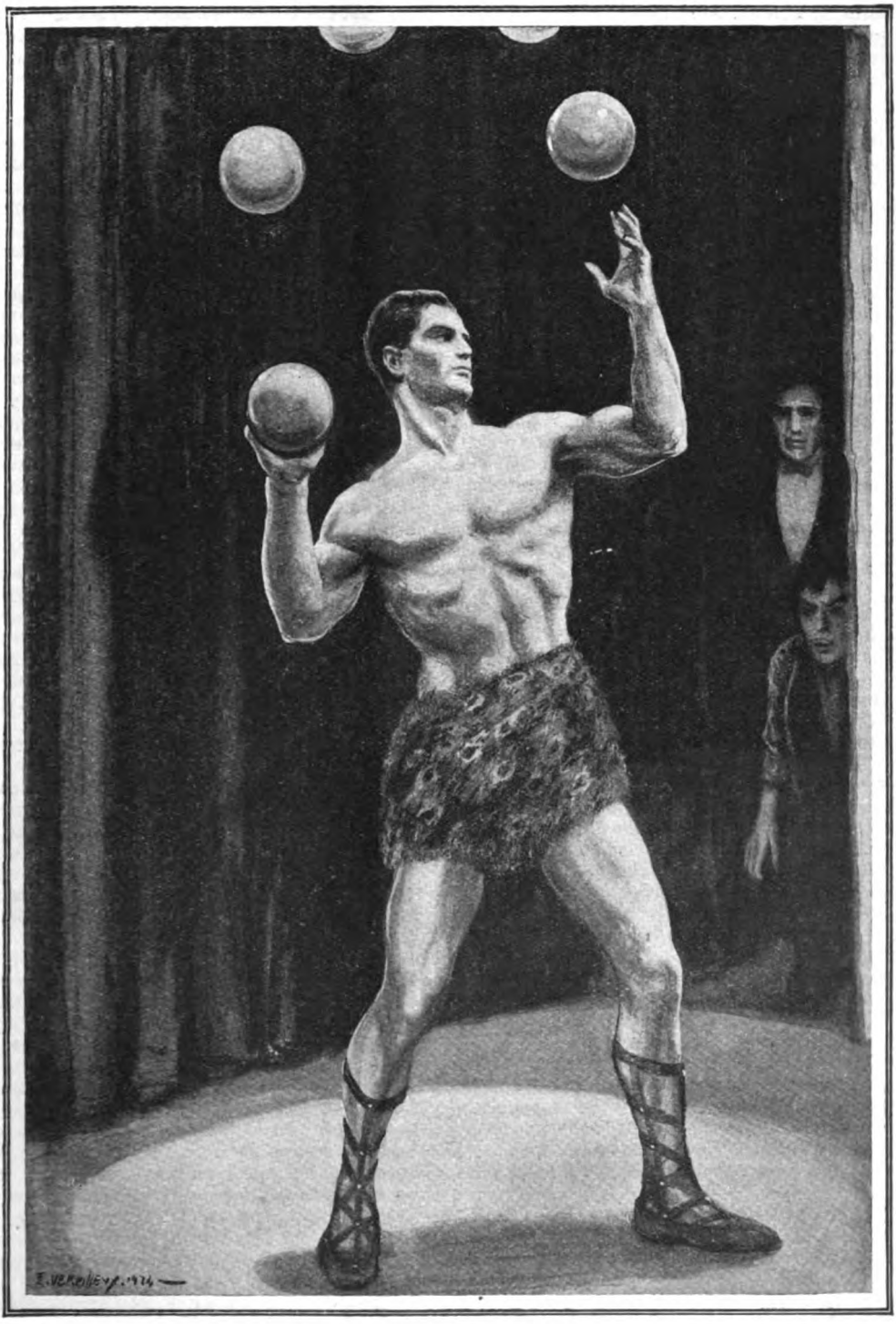
For a second the ex-strong man gazed at his late employer and the usurper of his job; then a cunning leer came into his eyes, and silently he slipped away. Fate had played into his hands, and if he were quick he could have his revenge that very night.

Making his way to the store-room, he caught up a bit of cotton waste, soaked it with oil, and hurried off to "Maximilian's" dressing-room, which, as he had seen both the strong man and the dwarf in the wings, he knew would be unoccupied. Owing to the fact that he had been a strong man himself, he knew the death-dealing danger of misplaced oil in the paraphernalia of might, and, entering the dressing-room, he took up one of the half-hundredweight balls, one with a peculiar flattening on one side, and smeared it over with the oily rag. Then, with an evil chuckle, he replaced it in its gilt-pillared portable rack, and crept out of the room.

"Ambulance will be needed at half-past ten, I should think," he sniggered.

Ten minutes later the great "Maximilian" strolled on to the stage in all his glory. The spot lime which shone on him showed his velvet skin dead-white against the tawn and black of his leopard-skin girdle; and as the thunder of applause rippled and banged at his appearance the little dwarf in the wings thrilled as though the pæans were for him.

The plaudits apparently left "Maximilian" unmoved. He regarded them as his right. He was a god to these people; and it was as well they realized it. Of his gracious condescension he entertained them, and whilst the orchestra played their minor notes, whilst Hercules in the wings held his breath with trembling admiration and worship, he went through his repertoire.



One by one "Maximilian the Marvellous" took up the steel spheres and tossed them into the air as though they were no heavier than tinfoil-covered wood.

until at a signal from him the band stopped abruptly, and two stage-hands brought forward the rack holding the five half-hundredweight steel spheres.

With a nonchalant smile "Maximilian" picked up one of the balls and, to show there was no fake, let it fall on to the boards with a shattering bang. A gasp went up from the audience, and the orchestra broke into a waltz.

One by one "Maximilian the Marvellous" took up the steel spheres and tossed them into the air as though they were no heavier than tinfoil-covered wood, and in a minute his head and shoulders became the centre of a whirling, flying mass of weights, each one capable of braining him.

For a time "Maximilian" seemed perfectly happy; but presently the stage-smile left his lips; and whilst his hands flew this way and that, an expression of anxiety crept to his face. One of the balls, the flattened one, was slow to leave his flinging fingers; it upset the rhythm and made him uncertain of the direction of its fall. It was a danger, and he must finish the turn quickly.

At a shout from him the orchestra stopped mid-bar, and up into the air went the slightly flattened ball. With a ball in each hand and one in the crook of each elbow "Maximilian" braced himself for his crowning feat; and bending his head forward he set himself to catch the fifty-six pounds of steel in the nape of his neck!

But even as he bent his head, fear seized him; in the act of flinging upwards the ball had slipped in his fingers, the throw had not been true; what would the fall be?

That instant seemed hours to "Maximilian"; and then—crash!

A terrible, devastating jar shook the strong man's mighty body, every bone in his frame seemed to bend and crack, as falling out of line the weight smashed down on to his spine just below his shoulder-blades; and with a startled, sobbing groan "Maximilian the Miracle Man" pitched forward, face downwards, on the boards.

With a terror-born oath Hercules fled from the wings to the stage as his hero fell; and before Mallox or any of the stage-hands could reach him, the dwarf was down on his knees by the fallen giant's side.

"Big 'un!" he gasped, "are you hurt bad?"

A mighty sobbing sigh came from "Maximilian."

"Don't move me," he groaned. "My back's broken. You never burnished the sweat off the flattened ball; it didn't fall true."

"D'yer mean this is my doin'?" cried Hercules.

"Yes, curse you," moaned "Maximilian."

And in the wings, as Mallox gestured the curtain down and the audience buzzed with sympathetic conjecture, "Bang" Thomas grinned.

"The perishin' lion is down now all right!" he muttered, and slunk away to have a pull at his flask. "It's astonishing what a drop of oil will do!"

III.

"MAXIMILIAN'S" back was not broken; his spine was intact; but every nerve had been jarred and jolted into a state of atrophy, condemning the Superman who had strutted and posed as a god of vital strength; who had walked the streets with the mien of a monarch; who had hired a dwarf so that the pygmy's misshapen limbs might, by contrast, give his own frame an additional glory in the eyes of man, to a future spent on an invalid couch and full-length push-chair.

At first, after the doctor had suggested by shrugs and gestures the half-truth, which is worse in its uncertainty than the whole, "Maximilian" refused to believe that Fate had dealt him so cruel a blow. He felt like a stricken king to whom news of the apostasy of his army has been brought. Desperately he clung to the belief that his kingdom, the empire of his body, would remain true, and do his bidding.

But slowly, as weeks went by and he found himself still chained to his bed in the lodgings he had thought to occupy for so brief a time; as stealthily his limbs grew cold and numb; as daily the torture periods of his back increased in duration, he realized the truth.

Believing that it was owing to Hercules' neglect in not burnishing the weight that the accident had happened, never a day passed that he did not pour acid curses of reproach on the dwarf's head; and Hercules took the blame; took it humbly, and with the gentleness of a woman nursed his fallen hero, and disregarded the searing curses which pain, despair, and passion ripped from "Maximilian's" lips.

Then, a month after the accident, when, along with the peeling tattered posters of the out-of-date, "Maximilian the Miracle Man" was slipping from the public's mind, the added horror of failing funds came to the "Muscle Millionaire." He had never saved, but spent recklessly and magnificently; and faced with penury he called Hercules to him with a viciously sardonic laugh.

"You've sucked me dry, you stoat!" he snarled, when the dwarf stood by his side. "You pulled me down, and now there's nothing left; it ain't any good you waiting

longer—there's nothing more for you to get. I'm for the poor-house, and you must go hopping on your own again."

There was an expression of utter agony on Hercules' face as he heard these words; but he said nothing for a moment; then a gleam came into his sombre eyes.

"Meantersay you're broke?" he murmured.

"To the wide," snarled "Maximilian," bitterly.

"Then I guess I'd better get another job," said the dwarf.

"Maximilian" gave a derisive chuckle.

"I thought you'd see it that way," he sneered.

"With luck, I could make enough for both of us," added Hercules, disregarding his hero's gibe. "I'd die happy if I could do something big like that for you. God, if only I was a proper-shaped man!"

He turned as he spoke and left the room; and for a space the crumpled Adonis on the dingy bed felt ashamed of his words.

IT was an hour later when Hercules came to "Maximilian" again.

"I've got a job," he announced. "Mallox, of the East-end Palace has took me on as a stage-hand. 'Bang' Thomas is boozing worse than ever, and Mallox has given me his job."

"A stunted gargoyle like you won't be much good as a stage-hand," sneered "Maximilian." "What's he going to pay you?"

"A couple of quid a week," answered Hercules. "It ain't much; but it'll keep you from the poor-house. Gosh! Fancy me being able to serve you, and keep you from going pauper! It makes me feel good!"

"Well," growled "Maximilian," letting his eyes rest on the misshapen figure by his bedside, "if that ain't the frozen limit!"

He closed his eyes, and Hercules tiptoed from the room.

Each evening for the next week Hercules worked at the theatre. He was supremely happy; happier even than he had been during that brief time when he had been the background for a Monarch of Muscle. He was really serving his hero now. He, a dwarf, was the only bulwark between the great "Maximilian" and starvation; and with zest he flung himself into the business of learning the craft of the power behind the scenes.

And then one evening the unbelievable thing happened. It was half-way through the second house, and alert and eager Hercules was standing in the wings waiting for 'Jim Slim," a knockabout comedian, to take the stage. "Jim Slim" had hurt himself in his previous turn, and Hercules had been instructed to stand by in order to drop the curtain if the funny man showed signs of collapse.

"Jim Slim" was slow in taking his call; and already the orchestra was marking time for his entry on the stage, when suddenly a shuffling step came behind Hercules, and, turning round, the dwarf gazed into the drink-delirious eyes of "Bang" Thomas.

"So you'm the perisher as 'as took my job again, are you?" he snarled, swaying threateningly towards the dwarf. 'Doorkeeper said I weren't wanted, as my job had been given to someone else. So I dotted him one and come up to see who it was as was robbin' me of my liveli'ood."

"Push off," said Hercules. "I'm busy!"

"Busy, are you?" snarled "Bang" Thomas. 'Not 'arf so blistering busy as you'll be in a minute! I put your high and mighty pal out of business by wiping an oil rag round one of his weights, and I'll——"

"What! It was you, was it?" gasped Hercules, and forgetful of everything else, unconscious of the fact that Mallox on the prompt side was making feverish signs to him to drop the curtain, so that he might announce to the audience that "Jim Slim" was unable to appear a second time, he flung himself at the ex-strong man.

But drunk and sodden as he was, "Bang" Thomas was more than a match for the dwarf; and with a swing of his right he caught Hercules on the chest and knocked him head over heels, arms and legs flying in a mad windmill of motion, bang on to the stage!

As a funny man's entry before the pleasure-seeking public it was a masterpiece of humour; and as Hercules rolled like a shot rabbit to mid-stage, a roar of delighted surprise came from pit, stalls, and dress-circle.

It was simply amazing how these comedians could tumble without hurting themselves!

For half a second, dazed and winded, Hercules lay still; and then, hearing the riot of laughter from over the footlights, and realizing where he was, he scrambled dizzily to his feet.

What had been a roar of laughter now became a tumult of ecstatic, joyous, uncontrollable delight.

This was a wonderful turn! Who the dickens was this burlesque of a man, who came on to the stage like a human ball, and then stood up on his stunted legs and gazed at the audience in a half-soaked way whilst he rubbed the back of his large head? He was an artist, anyway! Lord, what a freak he looked!

Mallox, seeing what had taken place, had dashed round the rear of the stage and had "Bang" Thomas hauled off; and now, although still in a hopeless fog from his fall, Hercules knew that what was expected of him was to get off that stage as quickly as he could and make room for the great "Jim Slim."

With what he intended to be an apologetic smile, but which appeared to the audience as one of the most humorous grimaces a funny man ever contrived, he essayed to bow as he had seen "Maximilian" bow to a cheering crowd; and immediately fresh gusto came to the laughter of the onlookers.

It rattled poor Hercules, and with a hurried step he tried to "walk-off," but to his horror he found that his ankle was badly sprained, and at the second step he came down again as though he had tripped over his own huge feet!

Laughter swept the stalls and pit, mounted to the dress-circle and gallery, and crackled round the boxes. Heroically Hercules staggered to his feet again and tried to keep his end up.

"Sorry!" he shouted into the gloom beyond the footlights. "But I got a date with a doctor!"

Limping, he made for the wings, where he could see Mallox's shirt-front.

"Hi! Come back!" yelled a voice from the amphitheatre, and in a trance Hercules saw Mallox waving him back to the stage. He turned, hesitant and uncertain.

"What you want?" he shouted across the orchestra. "I ain't a funny man! I'm 'Ercules, the scene-shifter. A chap shifted me into view by accident! I ain't funny. I——" He stopped abruptly, realizing that his voice could not be heard above the thunder of laughter his appearance alone caused; and at that moment his father's words came to him: "If I call him Hercules folk'll laugh the minnit they looks at him," and behind the shrinking cripple's outward buffoonery a sudden gleaming idea came: Why shouldn't he make capital out of his stunted frame as "Maximilian" had made it out of his perfection?

"I'll have a cut at it!" thought Hercules in that tense moment; and looking up he caught Mallox's eye, saw him nod and smile, and turned to the audience again.

With a desperately working brain he dug up every joke he'd ever heard; pattered as he'd pattered at street corners; as he'd heard hucksters patter in the selling of their wares; and during the whole time the audience chuckled in monotone, desiring to laugh loudly and long at the utter ridiculousness of his appearance, but loath to lose a single one of the pearls of natural humour which dripped from the dwarf's lips.

But at last he ran dry. The shooting

Laughter swept the stalls and pit, mounted to the dress-

stabbing pain from his injured ankle was stupefying him; his heart was beating with the speed of a racing motor-engine; the stage suddenly seemed to float round and from beneath his feet. His words came slower and slower, as though he were falling to sleep, and with a sigh he sank to the boards, as though weary of his job

With the touch of an artist, Mallox signalled the curtain to fall. Hercules had

made an original entry, he had chanced to make an equally original exit. And from beyond that curtain, as Mallox and a stage-hand lifted the dwarf up and carried him to

circle and gallery, and crackled round the boxes.

a dressing-room, a storm of applause dithered round the theatre. What mattered it to the packed audience that trouble and weariness were in the world? A great new laughter-maker had been given them!

A YEAR later Hercules, now shaven and clothed in the high note of fashion, walked along by the sea at Monte Carlo; by his side strolled a man of huge frame but wasted muscles, throwing into strong relief the stunted figure of the dwarf by his side.

"Lord!" said Hercules, presently. "It don't seem real, does it? Twelve months ago you was a popular favourite and give me a job to go about with you to show your bigness off; and now because 'Bang' Thomas broke you, and tried to break me, I'm the popular favourite and have given you the job of showing my littleness off!"

"Maximilian" smiled sadly.

"It's a funny world, Mouse," he said.

"But not such a bad 'un after all," added the dwarf. He paused and watched his companion's gait for a second. "Yes," he continued, presently, "you're walking a whole lot better to-day. It's a good job I heard of that French surgeon and, thanks to the public being tickled to death by my stunted shape, was able to pay any fee he liked to ask.'

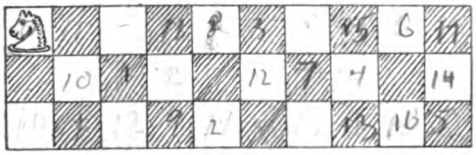
"Maximilian" smiled and gazed out to sea sadly. He had relearned the old fable that at times a mouse is mightier than a lion.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

698.—A REDUCED KNIGHT'S TOUR.

I HAVE stated in these pages and elsewhere that a complete re-entrant knight's tour cannot be made on a rectangular board of fewer than 30 squares. This is quite correct, but all writers on the subject have



supposed that the board must be 6 by 5, following the belief of the great Euler himself that no such tour could be made on any board with only three squares on one side. We have, unfortunately, taken that for granted, but Mr. Ernest Bergholt has discovered that it is an error. A re-entrant tour (that is, one in which the last move, after visiting every square, brings the knight back to its starting point) is possible on the board shown—10 by 3. It is an interesting study to discover the greatest number of fundamentally different ways in which this may be done, for these are very few. Variations obtained by merely turning the board round or reflecting in a mirror are not considered as fundamentally different. As the tour is re-entrant, you may, of course, start wherever you like.

699.—FACTORIZING.

AN anonymous correspondent asks me to give the factors (the numbers that will divide it without any remainder) of this number—1 0000000000001. This is easily done if you happen to know something about numbers of this peculiar form. In fact, it is just as easy for me to give two factors if you insert, say, one hundred and one noughts, instead of eleven, between the two ones. There is a curious, easy, and beautiful rule for these cases. Can you find it?

700.—SELLING EGGS.

A WOMAN took a certain number of eggs to market and sold some of them. The next day, through the industry of her hens, the number left over had been doubled, and she sold the same number as the previous day. On the third day the new remainder was trebled and she sold the same number as before. On the fourth day the remainder was quadrupled, and her sales the same as before. On the fifth day what had been left over were quintupled, yet she sold exactly the same as on all the previous occasions, and so disposed of her entire stock. What is the smallest number of eggs she could have taken to market the first day, and how many did she sell daily?

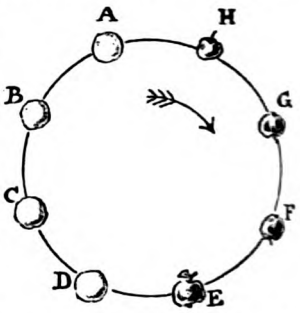
701.—A RUSTIC CHARADE.

A CHARMING young correspondent who has passed her ninetieth year and is still enthusiastic about puzzles reminds me of a little rustic charade that I heard in the West of England as a boy, but had quite forgotten. Here it is:—

My *first's* a little thing what hops.
My *second* gives us good hay crops.
My *whole* we eats with mutton chops.

702.—APPLES AND ORANGES.

A MAN arranged four apples and four oranges in a circle in the order shown in the illustration. He told his son to select any number he chose and, starting at H as "one" and counting in the direction of the arrow, to take the fruit at which his count stopped. Removing that fruit and starting again at the next one in order, he could count out a second fruit. And so on until he had taken four of them. The boy decided to count out every seventh. This, of course, gave him first B, then C, then A, and finally the apple G. He was disappointed, as he wanted to get all the oranges. What is the smallest number he might have selected to do this? Of course, 840 (the L.C.M. of 8, 7, 6, 5) will count them out in the order A, B, C, D, but there are eleven smaller numbers that will serve.



Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

694.—A GENERAL ELECTION.

THE answer is 39,147,416 different ways. Add 3 to the number of members (making 618) and deduct 1 from the number of parties (making 3). Then the answer will be the number of ways in which 3 things may be selected from 618. That is $\frac{618 \times 617 \times 616}{1 \times 2 \times 3} =$ 39,147,416 ways.

695.—AN ENIGMA.

THE required word is "invisible"! (I N visible).

696.—AN EPITAPH (A.D. 1538).

IF two widows had each a son, and each widow married the son of the other and had a daughter by the marriage, all the relationships mentioned would be found to result.

697.—FOR JUVENILES.

TOM must have had seven apples and Dick five.

STRONGHEART THE WONDER-DOG OF THE FILMS

by

Richard D.S McMillan

STORIES about the intelligence of animals—dogs in particular—are so oft-recurring and usually so remarkable that many people who never come in contact with dogs are inclined to take such narratives with a pinch of salt ; their attitude is like that of the club members listening, slightly bored, to the enthusiastic fisherman's tale about "the whopper he just lost."

Now, however, it should no longer be a difficult matter for the dog-owner to make sceptics realize that the marvellous things he relates about canines are true ; he can take his friends to the cinema and show them a dog which not only vindicates everything he has said, but which will awe the doubting Thomases into silence with its almost incredible cleverness.

This dog does a hundred and one things, from falling in love to being bowed down with well-simulated grief. He is no trick dog, this, for he plays the leading *rôle* in film dramas in which he expresses emotions almost as realistically as any Rodolph Valentino ; and, indeed, one has to see him to realize how truly wonderful he is.

Strongheart, for such is the name of this remarkable wolf-dog, has been a cinema star for some years now. He has figured in three film dramas, and he is at present completing another and even greater picture —appropriately enough, Jack London's "White Fang."

Strongheart might well have been the prototype for Jack London's hero dogs, for he has had a career as romantic and varied, as full of thrills, adventures, and daring deeds, as any of these canines of fiction. It is hard to have to confess the fact that Strongheart was born a German. He was trained in his native country as a police dog. Happily his heart was in the right place, for during the war he worked with the Belgian Red Cross, bringing in the wounded from the line of fire and little dreaming that his training for this work of mercy was to stand him in good stead when, years afterwards, he made his bow to the cinema camera. For three years he was in the field continuously, except when slightly wounded by shrapnel after the second battle of Ypres.

After the war an American film producer, in search of an intelligent dog for cinema work, heard of Strongheart, and, finding that the remarkable stories he had been told of the animal's sagacity fell short of the actual truth, entered into negotiations for his purchase. So Strongheart said goodbye to his Belgian owner—to understand whose language, after the German of his former master, had caused him so much pain and worry—to begin life again in a strange land, where his new master's speech appeared to be even more heart-breakingly difficult to comprehend.

Strongheart soon adapted himself to his new surroundings, and not long afterwards he came into the custody of Mr. Laurence Trimble, a trainer of animals, under whose mastership he was to rise to the highest pinnacle of dog-fame.

With his various masters the dog had been

singularly fortunate; they showed him the requisite amount of kindness to develop his natural abilities, whereas cruelty in any form in all probability would have repressed his initiative once and for all. But he was most lucky in falling finally into the hands of Mr. Trimble, who has made a science of animal training, and whose two main maxims in this connection are: that scorn is the most severe form of chastisement in the canine world, and that kindness will make a dog do more than cruelty.

MR TRIMBLE set about training Strongheart, and for six months the two were never out of sight or hearing of one another for longer than ten minutes. At the end of that period the dog was cast for his first big *rôle*—in "The Silent Call." This story, vivid, absorbing, and sometimes a little grim, was set in the mountains of California. According to the plot, the ranchers are making a war of extermination against wolves. One, however—half dog, half coyote, and mated to a wolf—is spared, and her puppy, Flash, is adopted by one of the ranchers.

Strongheart played the part of Flash, and we see him grow to maturity. Then his life is made miserable because he is left alone when his master goes on a journey. He becomes savage, or at least the old instincts return to his breast, and one night he attacks the cattle. The ranchers chase him to the hills, where he mates with a wolf. Afterwards he returns to the ranch and succeeds in making friends again with the men, with the result that he is reinstated.

In this picture Mr. Trimble was faced with one of the most difficult problems so far as Strongheart was concerned. The dog had been trained never to attack other animals. How, then, could he be induced to make war upon the cattle? The difficulty was solved by bringing about a friendship between the dog and a young heifer with whom Strongheart was trained to play. Thus it is that in the film we see the dog make repeated rushes at the heifer, jumping upon him from one side and then another. But these manœuvres on the part of the dog, far from being savage, are natural ebullitions of friendliness.

The actions of Strongheart throughout the film are remarkable, and the impression one obtains is that the dog feels the part, that he really does, in turn, fall in love, that he really is consumed with hatred, that he is jealous and angry. It is not so much that he displays these emotions—the remarkable fact is that he reveals them at the proper time, so that the story, with its canine hero, runs on smoothly, one dramatic incident following another until at the curtain one is struck with wonder at the dog's power.

Now let us see how Mr. Trimble succeeded in getting Strongheart to "register" the proper emotion at the proper time. In "The Silent Call," Strongheart and his wild wolf mate—a part played by a full-blooded wolf, Lady Silver, trained by Mr. Trimble—have made their home in a cave in the mountains. The dog goes out in search of food for the wolf and their cubs. When he returns, he finds his home has been dynamited by the villain in the story, a man who hates dogs, wolves, and every other kind of animal. In the film we see Strongheart display fierce hatred and then overwhelming grief.

The dog was not ill-treated to get this scene—or, indeed, any other. The effect was secured quite simply. A blanket belonging to a dog which Strongheart really despised and hated was placed in the dirt of the den. When Strongheart passed before the camera he caught a whiff of the scent of this dog's blanket. Immediately his hair bristled and he darted for the den, naturally thinking that the other dog was there. We see him begin to dig fiercely in the *débris* of the den, and he is growing angrier and angrier, when he suddenly stops. He has heard the bark of the other dog, who, though the audience do not know it, has been placed in a wired-in box and brought within sight of Strongheart but out of range of the camera. Strongheart moves away from the den towards the other dog. His ears are flat back against his head, and he is showing his savage fangs in a vicious snarl. His one idea seems to be revenge, to get at this villain who has brought his home to ruin. He stands like that, the picture of rage incarnate, looking in the direction taken by the villain.

For the purposes of the story it is now necessary for the animal to show grief. He must turn his thoughts from the villain, his enemy, to his home and loved ones. How is this to be done?—how is Strongheart's very real anger to be curbed? For Mr. Trimble it is a comparatively simple matter. He is standing on one side of the camera, though, of course, out of range, for the dog is occupying the whole of the picture.

"Strongheart, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" Mr. Trimble asks. Then he turns his back on the dog. That is all—and it is quite sufficient. The dog knows he is scorned—by his master, the person he loves most dearly, his best friend in all the world. What can it mean? What has he done? We can imagine Strongheart asking himself these questions; and his face assumes an expression of abject misery. If ever anyone, any animal, was overcome by grief, it is

Strongheart. He grovels in the dirt, heart-broken!

Of course, to the audience it appears as if Strongheart's sorrow has been caused by the loss of his mate and cubs.

Later in the same film Strongheart is shown, at dusk, on the pinnacle of a hill. He is lying down, and gazes wistfully into the distant valley. There comes a "close-up," and we see an expression of infinite sadness on his face, for he is still, apparently, mourning the loss of his dear ones. In reality the dog is not mourning any loss. His thoughts are upon one person only—his master. He is simply obeying his master's command to remain on that spot until he returns. Strongheart sees Mr. Trimble walk down the valley, and the farther he goes the more miserable-looking the dog becomes. Strongheart watches his master out of sight, and then, as if he has given up hope, he lies down and puts his head between his paws, yearning with all his heart for the word that will release him.

His face assumes an expression of abject misery. If ever any animal was overcome by grief, it is Strongheart.

When, after the completion of the first film, Mr. Trimble came to take stock of what had been achieved, he arrived at the conclusion that the time spent in training Strongheart had been fruitful in the extreme, and it was possible that even greater things might be done by the canine actor.

Dog *v.* Man.—Strongheart is seen forcing the villain down a steep slope into the river.

The trainer's experience of Strongheart had confirmed him in his opinion that, though a dog has not reasoning power, he has a certain faculty which is a remarkably efficient substitute for it, and that this faculty is occasionally so extraordinary in its manifestations that it borders on the psychic.

"The average dog is an excellent mind-reader," Mr. Trimble declares. "He is not half so easily deceived about some things as are men. His master, for example, may harbour a dislike for a certain person, and yet, in the presence of that person, he speaks kindly and without apparent malice. The dog is not to be deceived by this. In spite of his master's show of courtesy, he growls and gives other evidence of his dislike for his visitor. He is watching every expression on the face of his master, and in every little facial twist during the conversation reads dislike. His master's words mean nothing; they are insincere. And so, in spite of his master's outward attitude, the dog is always hostile when that other person is near by."

This is not reasoning power on the part of the dog, Mr. Trimble argues. But it is the equivalent in the world of dumb brutes—it is the association of ideas. The dog has

observed these same expressions, scowls, etc., before, when his master made no attempt to cloak his real feelings by deceiving words. It is this same association of ideas that enables one to get a dog to do things. Take the case of a dog-owner who has been in the habit of bailing out a boat with a sponge. "Go and get my sponge, Fido," the master says. The dog goes off immediately, and returns with the sponge. Now, if it were reasoning power that the dog used he would perhaps have got a bailer or a hose-pipe, or some equally good substitute for a sponge. But as he had always seen his master bail out the boat in the same way, he could only associate the sponge with this process. The difference between human reasoning and a dog's association of ideas is reached just at this point. Mr. Trimble doesn't think a dog will ever get beyond that.

Mr. Trimble was, if possible, even more painstaking in training Strongheart for "Brawn of the North," his second picture. He exhibited almost superhuman patience, and scene after scene was taken again and again until it was at last considered to be perfect.

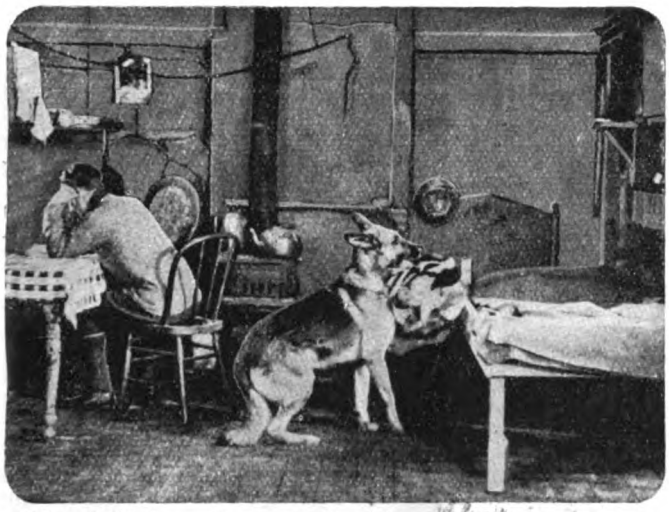
Strongheart to the Rescue.—Carrying a baby, wrapped in furs, back through the snow to its parents.

By transporting ourselves, in imagination, to Hollywood, we get an interesting insight into Mr. Trimble's methods of training, and note with surprise that these are unconventional in the extreme. For instance, the trainer does not give the dog any reward for obeying a command; that is to say, he does not give him a biscuit or piece of meat to impress upon him that when he does a thing well he may expect something good. Mr. Trimble acts quite differently, for the idea he instils into Strongheart is that if he does as he is told he will get his master's approval; if he doesn't, approval will be withheld. It doesn't take long for us, as spectators, to see that Strongheart will do more to please his master than many another dog would do to get a reward.

The dog is never punished in the sense that he is chastised. The greatest instrument for discipline and training in Mr. Trimble's hands is the dog's dread of reproach. When Strongheart sees by the expression on his master's face that he has failed in anything, his dejection is almost tragic. Mr. Trimble holds the view that when Strongheart makes a mistake he does not do so intentionally; the fact is that he did not understand. And in these circumstances it is for his trainer to exercise patience and show him what is right.

"Brawn of the North" is a much more vigorous picture in many ways. The scene is laid in the snowy wastes of Alaska, where "Brawn," played by Strongheart, and his master and mistress encounter many adventures. One of the most exciting incidents in the story is when the sledge-dogs run away, carrying the baby with them, and Strongheart goes to the rescue. The "huskies" have been frightened by a pack of timber wolves, which, driven to desperation by the pangs of hunger, had followed the man and the girl, who had been journeying south with their baby. During a stop the wolves made an attack and the dogs took to flight, rushing panic-stricken through the snow, dragging the sledge with its tiny burden behind them.

We see the wolves set off in pursuit, and excitement reaches fever-heat when Strongheart goes to the rescue. His canine intelligence tells him that he must take a short cut if he is to outwit the wolves; so he makes for the summit of the hill round the base of which the fugitive pack have



The End of the Journey.—Strongheart restoring the baby to its bed.

disappeared. Before he has gone far Strongheart comes upon the sledge, which has caught in a tree trunk. The dogs are straining their hardest to pull it free. In an instant Strongheart has lifted the baby to the ground, and next moment he sets off, carrying the child back to its grief-stricken parents.

In "Brawn of the North," as in "The Silent Call," we see Strongheart come to grips with the villain. Now the dog was quite friendly with the men who played these respective parts, yet in the first picture it was necessary for Strongheart to maul his human enemy in a most savage manner, while in "Brawn of the North" he had to fight with the villain, roll down a snow-covered slope with him, and then force him into a swiftly flowing stream, in which he (the villain) was supposed to have met his death.

In both cases the desired effect was secured by making Strongheart believe that it was all fun. In the second film we see the dog making repeated jumps at the villain's throat, and at last lay hold of him and drag him down the hill. The secret was that Strongheart had been taught to play with the man's tie, which the villain, unknown to the audience, waved in the dog's face. Strongheart made playful snaps at the tie, and then the villain put his hand, containing the tie, to his neck, giving the appearance in the film of protecting his throat from the dog. Of course, the audience expect the dog to jump at the man's neck, and Strongheart does not disappoint them, probably thinking that this game is just the sort of thing he likes.

At last the dog makes a higher jump at the man, who suddenly throws his arms round the animal, and the two roll over and over down the hill. To all appearances Strongheart has bowled the man over. As they roll down we see Strongheart "worrying" his victim, but it is all friendly play and part of the game.

In yet another scene there is a touch of comedy when Strongheart, coming suddenly upon the lovers in the act of kissing, shows the greatest amazement. The man and the girl are in the cabin, when Strongheart comes to the door. Just then the man takes the girl in his arms and kisses her on the lips, and at the same time the dog cocks his head first to one side and then to another. You feel that Strongheart is

Strongheart's Fight with the Villain.—It looks like a savage attack, but is really play.

saying to himself: "Well, I never! Did you ever see anything like that?"

This was how the above effect was secured. While the couple were kissing, Mr. Trimble, being in the cabin but out of range of the camera, called Strongheart. The dog came at once and, opening the door, stopped on the threshold.

"Well, Strongheart," his trainer declared, "how would you like——?"

The question was left unfinished, and Strongheart, expecting Mr. Trimble to say something like "a bone" or "a walk," jerked his head from side to side, striving eagerly not to miss his master's next word. He was completely keyed-up for something unexpected, waiting for a surprise. And, of course, the result was that in the film the dog is seen to be acting the scene as if he understood exactly what was expected of him.

You feel that Strongheart is saying to himself: "Well, I never! Did you ever see anything like that?"

It is a commonplace to hear people, when speaking of a favourite dog, declare that "he understands every word I say." Literally, that may not be quite accurate, but it comes very near to being true so far as Strongheart is concerned. Sometimes it appears as if he can follow every word in his master's everyday conversation. Thus Mr. Trimble may be speaking to someone in an ordinary tone of voice. His remarks have nothing whatever to do with Strongheart. Then in the same tone he goes on, still speaking in his ordinary voice, "Now I am going to tell Strongheart to go to bed." Next moment Strongheart has got to his feet and calmly made his way to his sleeping-place.

Mr. Trimble's views on dogs are interesting. For instance, he firmly believes that they have individual degrees of character. Strongheart, he says, has an innate dignity and depth of feeling that are as fine as anything that may be encountered in a human being. It is therefore the easiest thing in the world to humiliate him, but by doing so unwarrantably one would suppress those finer instincts.

"On no account laugh at an animal's mistakes," Mr. Trimble declares. "Do not ridicule him, and do not play practical jokes upon him. Above all, never put him in a position where he will feel embarrassed or foolish. You will hurt his feelings just in the same way as you would hurt those of a man in similar circumstances. Again, my advice to dog-owners is never to sneer at their pets. An animal that has any nobility in its character will be hurt to the quick by such treatment, which will break rather than build up the bond of friendship that should exist between dog and master."

By the time this is in print, Strongheart's third picture, "The Love Master," should be released.

Strongheart, who is now about nine years of age, is at present hard at work on his latest film, "White Fang," in which he should be seen to even greater advantage. As it is, however, Strongheart has more than earned the description of "the wonder-dog of the films."

THE TIME BALANCE

by

GLADYS ST. JOHN-LOE

ILLUSTRATED BY F.E.HILEY

I SAID "good night" to Valda outside the narrow, rather grimly-ugly house in which she lived, and proceeded to walk home to my lodgings in the neighbourhood of Notting Hill Gate.

It was a long walk. It was also very late, and I was more than usually tired; but somehow the thought of bed didn't attract me. My brain was on fire with the irritant fever of revolt, a chafing, passionate revolt against the whole of the facts of life as presented to me at the moment.

It had been one of those exasperating evenings when everything seems to go wrong out of sheer cussedness, when the merest trivialities become magnified into towering grievances. For no particular reason we had both been feeling nervy and strung-up, ready to start a disagreement over the least thing; and as I tramped up the slight incline of Church Street, under a waning September moon that bobbed illusively among the housetops, I found myself reviewing the situation from the lowest depths of despondency.

We had been engaged three years now, Valda and I—three post-war years of everlasting struggle against circumstances—and our chances of marrying seemed as remote as ever. I was still the impecunious journalist I had been in the summer of 1920—immensely keen on my work but lacking any definite guarantee of the future—while Valda still filled the post of shorthand-typist in a City merchant's office. We weren't afraid of taking risks, but it happened that we were more than ordinarily ambitious. Idealists, I suppose you'd call us. We wanted so much to make a fine thing out of life, to weave into it the pattern of a rare and lasting beauty. We shrank from the possibility of being sucked down into the welter of poverty and meanness that seemed to swamp so many of the lives of the people around us. And so time had dragged on—mockingly, churlishly. That at the end of three years we still continued to be genuinely in love was the only bright spot on the horizon. And to-night even that had seemed in danger of eclipse.

I drew in a long breath and stared gloomily at the huddled shadows of the houses. Then, abruptly, I squared my shoulders, lifted my gaze to the slender wisp of a moon, and vowed renewed defiance of fate. "Hope springs eternal——" It wasn't reasonable to suppose that fortune could elude me for ever.

WITH intense weariness, and the aid of banister rails that shook in their sockets like teeth in the jaws of a skull, I climbed the stairs to my stuffy little second-floor bed-sitting-room.

I lit the hissing gas-jet, tossed my hat on to a peg on the wall, and glanced apathetically about the room. And almost the first thing I noticed was a telegram propped against the water-jug on the table in the middle.

Wondering a little, I picked it up, tore open the flimsy yellow envelope, and stood close up under the gas in order more easily to decipher the pencilled writing. The next moment a sensation of surprise ran through me like an electric shock. The telegram was from Leeds, and was signed by a firm of solicitors whose name was familiar to me. In the terse wording peculiar to such methods of communication, it informed me of the death that day of my uncle, Silas Cadwell, and of the fact that the funeral would take place at three p.m. on Monday, 17th.

Monday! The day after to-morrow! I glanced at the post-office timing and saw that the message had been handed in at five-fifteen on Friday. That meant that it must have arrived soon after I had left for Gravesend on the special reporting job that had kept me busy all the previous night.

With the telegram still in my hand, I sank limply on to the edge of the bed. And suddenly all the bitter stored-up memories of this man, who had been my guardian and my father's half-brother, crowded back into my mind like so many gibbering ghosts.

I couldn't pretend to be sorry. There had never been any love lost between us. Even as a child he had hated me, punishing me savagely for the most trifling offences, striving by every means in his power to bend me to his will, to crush my naturally independent spirit under the grim weight of his own ruthlessness. But for the intervention of Uncle Nathan—who invariably defended me against his brother's periodic outbursts of cruelty—I have sometimes wondered how I should have survived at all.

Nathan Cadwell was two years younger than Silas, and a more completely opposite type of man it would be impossible to imagine. He was gentle and tolerant where the other was hard and bitter. His expression always held a certain wistful quality—like that of a child when it shuts fast the door of reality upon the rosy chamber of dreams. He was the most impracticable, the most patient, the most simple-hearted man I have ever known.

As I undressed and got into bed, I found myself speculating upon how much money Uncle Silas had left. That he must have died a rich man was certain. Like his brother Nathan, he had never married. Every ounce of his ruthless slave-driving energy he had put into the building up of the cotton and woollen manufacturing business he had inherited from his father. For forty years he had squeezed gold out of life as some men squeeze happiness. And now he was gone, blown out like a flame in the wind, leaving behind him the solid robe of material possessions with which he had striven to cover his spirit's nakedness.

Not for a moment did I delude myself with the notion that he had left anything to me. Our mutual antagonism had gone too deep for any last-minute softening on his part. But I liked to think that Uncle Nathan would benefit.

The younger of the two brothers was a comparatively poor man. What money he had originally possessed had dwindled away in numerous unprofitable channels. He spent most of his time conducting "experiments" of a chemical nature and in inventing things for which no one could find any practical use. He was also a keen botanist—having written a standard work on English wild flowers—and would sometimes go off upon long tramping tours by himself, vanishing and reappearing in the most casual manner. During the war he had become interested in the study of explosives, and for the purpose of carrying out his investigations in this direction had built himself a small bungalow in the middle of a wood in Kent, where he lived alone save for an elderly housekeeper.

It was now several months since I had had any news of him, and the thought that he would certainly be present at his brother's funeral was the main cause of my final decision to go up to Leeds on the Monday.

WHEN I arrived at my deceased relative's house in Tyne Street—the gaunt red house in which I had passed seven miserable years of my youth—it was to discover that, contrary to all expectations, Uncle Nathan was not among the mourners. No one seemed able to account for his absence.

"I'm sure I can't think why he hasn't come," old Neasden, the solicitor, replied in answer to my anxious questioning. "A telegram was sent to him shortly before nine o'clock on Friday morning. Mr. Cadwell died at exactly five minutes past eleven, and I at once dispatched a second telegram informing Mr. Nathan of the—ah—sad news."

"And he hasn't written or—or anything?"

"No. Of course, there's the chance that he may have been away—something of that sort."

I agreed, remembering Uncle Nathan's habit of occasionally disappearing from normal existence and leaving no channel of communication open behind him. His failure to put in an appearance had disappointed me keenly. I looked upon my journey from London as a woeful waste of time and money.

Late in the afternoon, in the lugubrious dining-room—to me hateful with the memory of past chastisements—Mr. Neasden read the will. It was a lengthy, tiresomely involved affair, from whose pedantic verbosities only one fact emerged with any clearness. This was to the effect that, after the disposal of certain minor legacies to various unimportant relatives, the whole of the residue of the dead man's very considerable estate was to go to his brother Nathan Cadwell—should the latter be alive to receive it. In the event of his being dead, it was to pass to some specified institution whose name I did not catch.

THE formality of the will-reading over, I hurried back to London—to find a surprise awaiting me in the person of old Martha Crump, Uncle Nathan's housekeeper.

As I opened the door of my room she rose up out of the shabby depths of the solitary arm-chair, lifted a red and swollen face out of a large, damp-looking handkerchief, and made a hurried movement towards me.

"Oh, Master Denny!" she exclaimed, using the old name that still occasionally rose to her lips in moments of stress. "I'm that *glad* you've come. I was beginnin' ter think as 'ow you weren't never goin' ter turn up."

"You! Martha!" I replied, amazedly. "But why——? What's the matter?"

She stared at me tragically. Her lips trembled.

"*E-everything's* the matter," she sobbed, wildly. "Everything! 'Ow ter begin tellin' 'e I don't rightly know—that I don't. Even ter jest think of it m-makes me go all over a-shiver."

"To—to think of what?"

"Why, a-findin' 'im d-dead—an' all that."

"Dead?" My bewilderment deepened. "Finding who dead? You aren't meaning Mr. Silas, are you?"

"*'Im!*" A look of scorn flashed into her red-rimmed eyes. "Who cares about 'im? It's master I'm meanin'."

"What? Uncle Nathan? Dead? But—but surely you must be making a mistake?"

She shook her head, tears streaming freely down her wrinkled cheeks.

"Mistake? 'Ow could I be makin' a mistake when it was meself as found 'im?"

"Found him? I'm afraid I don't understand. You say my uncle's dead?"

I stood close under the gas in order more easily to decipher the pencilled writing.

She sobbed noisily, dabbed her eyes with the handkerchief, and repeated:—

"Dead right enough, poor man. And such an unnatural death an' all. Every time I thinks about it——"

"Unnatural? But tell me——" I took her gently by the shoulders, put her back into the arm-chair, and seated myself opposite. Then, as calmly as possible, I went on: "Tell me—how did it happen?"

She choked down a fresh spasm of weeping. Her whole face became convulsed with horror.

"Blowed 'isself up—gunpowder, or summat. Leastways, that's what they says."

"Who does?"

"Police-Sergeant Motts—an' all them as is down there. Oh, a rare crowd, I can tell 'e—traipsin' around and pokin' their noses into everythin'. An' poor master lyin' there a corpse! Oh, it's awful! *Awful!* I couldn't bear it!"

I nodded understandingly. In imagination I could see it all so vividly—the dead man, the little bungalow hidden away in the desolate wood, the gaping crowd of villagers drawn to the scene, like filings to a magnet, at the first hint of tragedy.

"And when did it—this accident—happen?"

Martha blew her nose, straightened her somewhat tipsy-looking headgear, and replied:—

"*That*, sir's, what they don't rightly know—leas'ways, not 'zackly. They says as 'ow it must 'ave bin some time early on Friday morning—between nine and ten o'clock."

"Friday? Three days ago? But surely——! How is it they can't say nearer than that? There must have been a noise of some sort? The explosion, you know! You must have heard something?"

"But that's jest the trouble, sir. I weren't there to 'ear."

"Not there?"

"No. You see, I'd gone off ter spend a couple o' days with me sister, Mrs. Chandler, wot lives at Canterbury—'er bein' that bad with the rheumatics an' all. Master—'e were out in 'is 'workshop,' as 'e calls it, when I goes off about a quarter past eight on Friday morning." She sniffed noisily, gulped down a sob, and added: "An' ter think I weren't never goin' ter see 'im alive agin!"

"And you say it was you who—who first discovered what had happened?"

"Yes, sir—when I gets back agin this mornin'. And such a turn as it give me—ter see 'im a-lyin' there so queer and still-like—an' all one side the shed blowed out. At first I thought as 'ow 'e'd jest fainted or summat. 'E didn't seem ter be 'urt anywheres—no blood or anything like that. But when I goes ter try an' pick 'im up——! Oh, it was awful! I sha'n't never forget it—not 'til me dyin' day, that I sha'n't, sir."

I nodded sympathetically.

"And then? What did you do then?"

"Well, I was that scared I jest run fer all I was worth down ter Mr. Godden's. 'E goes off on 'is bike down ter Sergeant Motts in th' village—an' soon there was a rare crowd around, traipsin' everywhere and arstin' me all sorts o' questions. And at last I couldn't stand no more, so I took an' come straight 'ere ter you, sir. I says ter meself as 'ow you'd know what was best ter do."

She regarded me with an air of resigned and tragic helplessness, and as I returned her gaze I felt myself to be suddenly quite incapable of answering her. Getting up from my chair, I walked over to the window, stood staring vaguely down into the lamp-lit street below. Uppermost in my consciousness, piercing a whole host of conflicting emotions, was a sharp sense of loss. That Uncle Nathan should have died like that, so dramatically and alone, and—by a curious coincidence—on the same day, almost at the same hour, as Uncle Silas, seemed fantastically incredible.

On the same day—almost at the same hour!

The words echoed queerly in my brain, firing a sudden startled train of thought. At first it was as though only my subconscious mind realized the significance that lay behind them. Then, abruptly, the idea I was fumbling after crystallized into definite shape.

Silas Cadwell's will had stated quite clearly that the bulk of his fortune was to go to his brother Nathan *if the latter were alive to receive it*; but that, in the event of his being already dead, it was to pass to a certain institution. Consequently, if it could be proved that Uncle Nathan had in fact died between the hours of nine and ten on the previous Friday morning the institution got the money. If, on the other hand, it could be proved that he had survived until after five minutes past eleven, then he inherited—in which case the final settlement of the estate depended upon whether he himself had left a will.

The problem was an intriguing one, and one which looked as though it might yield interesting developments. Half an hour later, when Martha had been provided with supper and a bed for the night, I was still pondering over the extraordinary coincidence of my two uncles' deaths.

THE countryside, as we rushed through it in the train the following morning, was bright with autumn tints.

From Mersham Station we walked across country to the bungalow, buried in the leafy depths of Grayling Wood. And as we went, Martha—now considerably recovered in spirits—talked incessantly, until it seemed impossible that a single detail connected with the tragedy could have been left unrelated.

We found the bungalow apparently in the charge of Sergeant Motts and a policeman from Ashford.

"Bad job, this—'bout Mr. Cadwell," the former remarked, after a brief interchange of greetings. "Such a nice, pleasant gentleman, too. Queer to think of 'im lying 'ere three days—and no one knowing a thing about it."

"Yes, it does seem strange."

I glanced round at the white walls of the bungalow, at the red-tiled roof that burned in the sunlight with a smouldering warmth, at the small neat patch of carefully-tended garden, at the circling mass of trees that walled it about in all directions, creating an effect of peculiar isolation. Then I added:—

"I suppose there'll be an inquest?"

The sergeant nodded, assumed his best official air, and replied:—

"Oh, yes, sir. Always is in cases of this sort. Fixed for Friday, I b'lieve. They're goin' to fetch the body some time this afternoon."

We stood talking together for a few minutes longer. Then I left him and went into the bungalow.

"And when did it—this accident—happen?"

In the room that had been my uncle's bedroom, I found the dead man lying under a sheet—very calm and rigid and wax-like. Save for a bruise on the left temple and a certain discoloration of the whole of that side of the face, he seemed, superficially, at any rate, to have suffered little hurt. As I stood looking down upon the closed eyes and kindly features of the man who had been my best friend, I realized, more fully than I had yet done, the extent of my loss.

During the afternoon they fetched the body away on an ambulance, and with its going the last few stragglers from the village and the cottages round about melted from the scene. It was then that—prompted by the instinct of curiosity, which I suppose is inherent in all of us—I began a careful and detailed examination of the place.

The bungalow itself was a small four-roomed affair, standing in a quarter of an acre of cleared woodland, about thirty yards from a soft road and a good half-mile from the highway that runs between Ruckinge and Aldington. It would be difficult, I think, to find a more completely isolated spot anywhere in the South of England. About another hundred yards or so farther into the wood, and completely hidden from the bungalow by an intervening screen of trees and undergrowth, was the shed or "workshop" which Uncle Nathan had used for his experiments. It consisted of a single fairly large oblong apartment with windows running the entire length of one side, and a smaller outhouse which protruded at right angles from the main structure, and which had evidently been used as some sort of a store-room.

The interior of the former I found to be littered with innumerable oddments of whose nature and purpose I had only the vaguest idea. A carpenter's bench ran from end to end immediately in front of the

windows, and the thing that struck me as being very curious was the fact that, whilst a large section of the opposite wall had been blown out, not a single window had been broken or anything upon the bench displaced. There was not so much as a bottle overturned or a test tube smashed, though, judging by the distance to which bits of wood and metal guttering had been carried, the force of the explosion must have been very considerable.

By the time I had finished examining the shed the autumn dusk was already gathering and I was compelled to go back to the bungalow. Here I proceeded to while away the long evening by glancing through my dead uncle's papers.

There were a great number of them—all carefully packed away into tin boxes and containing, for the most part, elaborate accounts of past experiments, together with carefully-preserved diagrams and formulæ. Finally, in a drawer in a desk, I came upon a diary which had the appearance of having been kept scrupulously exact and up-to-date. All the entries made during the last few days before my uncle's death were given over to recording, in minute detail, the progress he was making in the manufacture of a certain substance which he called "Rodinite," and which, with his usual optimism, he seemed to anticipate was going to supersede all other forms of explosive for purposes of gun-firing in warfare.

The very last entry of all—written on the evening of Thursday, September 13th—concluded with the significant phrase: "To-morrow I shall make one more test—then I shall know."

I closed the diary with a sigh and was in the act of putting it back into the drawer from which I had taken it, when my fingers encountered a folded sheet of stiffish paper. Quite casually I took it out and opened it. The next moment I had uttered a cry of thrilled amazement. The paper was nothing less important than my uncle's will, drawn up only a few weeks before and witnessed by old Martha and someone signing the name of the Rev. John Potter. In it the dead man left everything he died possessed of to his brother Silas—with the provision that, should the latter predecease him, everything was to revert to myself.

My hands shook as they held the document. Springing to my feet, I began to pace the room in a wild frenzy of excitement—while each moment the realization of all that those simple words might mean to me grew clearer and clearer in my brain.

If it could be proved that Nathan Cadwell had outlived his brother Silas—even by so much as a few minutes—then I was the possessor of a fortune. If the reverse should be established, then everything—including the modest possessions which had been Uncle Nathan's during his lifetime—would automatically pass to the institution whose very name I had not thought worthy of remembrance. It was maddening—the sense of so much hanging in so flimsy a balance! One short hour or so of time!

As I paced feverishly to and fro, I thought of all that the money would mean to me. Valda and I could be married at once. The future would open before us like some wide and splendid avenue, flower-strewn with the rosy promise of happiness. All the fret and strain of the past three years would be banished for ever.

Such was the agitation of my mind that it was long past midnight before I could bring myself to lie down on a couch, draw a rug over me, and attempt to sleep.

THERE followed a day and a half of nerve-racking tension. The problem of the inheritance—which before had been a matter of curiosity rather than anything else—had now assumed a character of vital importance. I could think of nothing else. The very idea of leaving the matter to be solved by the slow unwinding of the law—or by whatever process it would eventually have to be settled—was intolerable. That, somewhere among the conglomerate hotch-potch of facts connected with the events of the previous Friday, there existed a clue capable of revealing the truth, I felt convinced. The trouble was to find it.

I spent the whole of Wednesday scouring the neighbourhood for information that might seem to have a bearing upon the problem; and by sorting out and piecing together the various scraps thus gathered I found myself in possession of the following coherent and relevant facts.

Martha had left the bungalow at a few minutes before eight on the Friday morning having previously carried her master's breakfast to the work-shed, where—as far as she was able to recollect—he appeared to be in the act of weighing some sort of a dark-coloured powder out of a glass bottle on to some scales. She expressed the opinion that he would probably have eaten the food without delay, because "if there was one thing 'e couldn't abide it was cold coffee."

The police surgeon still adhered to the belief that death had occurred not later, and probably considerably earlier, than ten o'clock. This opinion seemed now strengthened by the result of the post-mortem, which had established the fact that the dead man must have eaten a meal only a

"Bad job, this—'bout Mr. Cadwell," the sergeant remarked.

very short time before the explosion—and none of the food which Martha had left prepared in the bungalow had been touched.

From the boy at the Bilsington post-office I learnt that he had delivered the first telegram as nearly as he could remember

at about twenty minutes past eleven, that he had knocked repeatedly at the front door for several minutes without being able to make anyone hear, and had finally pushed the telegram into the letter-box and gone away. He seemed fairly certain that he had heard no unusual sound either coming or going, but, after much careful prompting, added the significant detail that a cat had jumped off a window-sill and rubbed itself against his legs—a large tabby cat similar to the one discovered dead within a few feet of my uncle's body. It was about half-past two when he returned with the second telegram, and, again receiving no answer to his knocking, had pushed it, as before, into the letter-box.

No one in the neighbourhood appeared to recollect having heard the report of the explosion, but, as blasting operations had been going on for some days in a stone quarry not far away, it seemed to me improbable that the noise, even if heard, would have attracted any especial attention.

The only hopeful piece of evidence centred about the cat, and this, when I mentioned it to Martha, was robbed of its value by her immediate reply :—

"Oh, *them!* Well, there's two of 'em, you see—Peter and Paul—like as two peas. Strangers can't never tell 'em apart."

Try as I might I could get hold of no definite clue that did not tend, if anything, to establish the probability of the accident having occurred, as the doctor believed, well before ten o'clock.

BY Thursday I had worked myself up to a pitch of painful excitement. The inquest was to take place on the following day. At any moment now the searchlight of public inquiry was liable to be directed upon Uncle Nathan's private affairs—upon the problem of the inheritance, with its vital reaction upon my own life. The torture of suspense grew hourly more poignant.

I spent the whole of the morning in the workshop. And once more I carefully examined all that it contained, strove with all the power of my imagination to reconstruct the *mise-en-scène* of the tragedy. I tried to picture how Uncle Nathan must have been standing—what he must have been doing. On the whole, it seemed probable that he had been at the bench, handling the fatal Rodinite. I placed myself in a position exactly opposite the spot where his dead body had been found, and, facing the window, stared with a desperate intentness at the various objects arranged before me.

On a shelf level with the window-sill stood a number of bottles and test tubes—some empty and some containing different-coloured powders or liquids. There were also a couple of retorts, a blow-lamp, and a partly-dismantled microscope. On the bench itself were more bottles, a wooden rack into which a lens and some slides—evidently belonging to the microscope—had been carelessly propped, a pair of finely-adjusted scales under a glass bell, and several other objects whose names I did not know.

One thing which rather puzzled me was a large, very thick slab of frosted glass, slightly hollowed out in the centre and covered—as, indeed, was everything else—with a faint sprinkling of fine grey dust. It was not unlike the glass mortars which dentists use to mix metal fillings, and it occurred to me that it might have been used for mixing the explosive that had caused the accident.

With one tentative finger I disturbed a small patch of the dust film; then, with my hand still resting on the slightly roughened surface of the glass, I stared thoughtfully out through the window at the autumn-tinted trees so drowsily still in the morning sunlight.

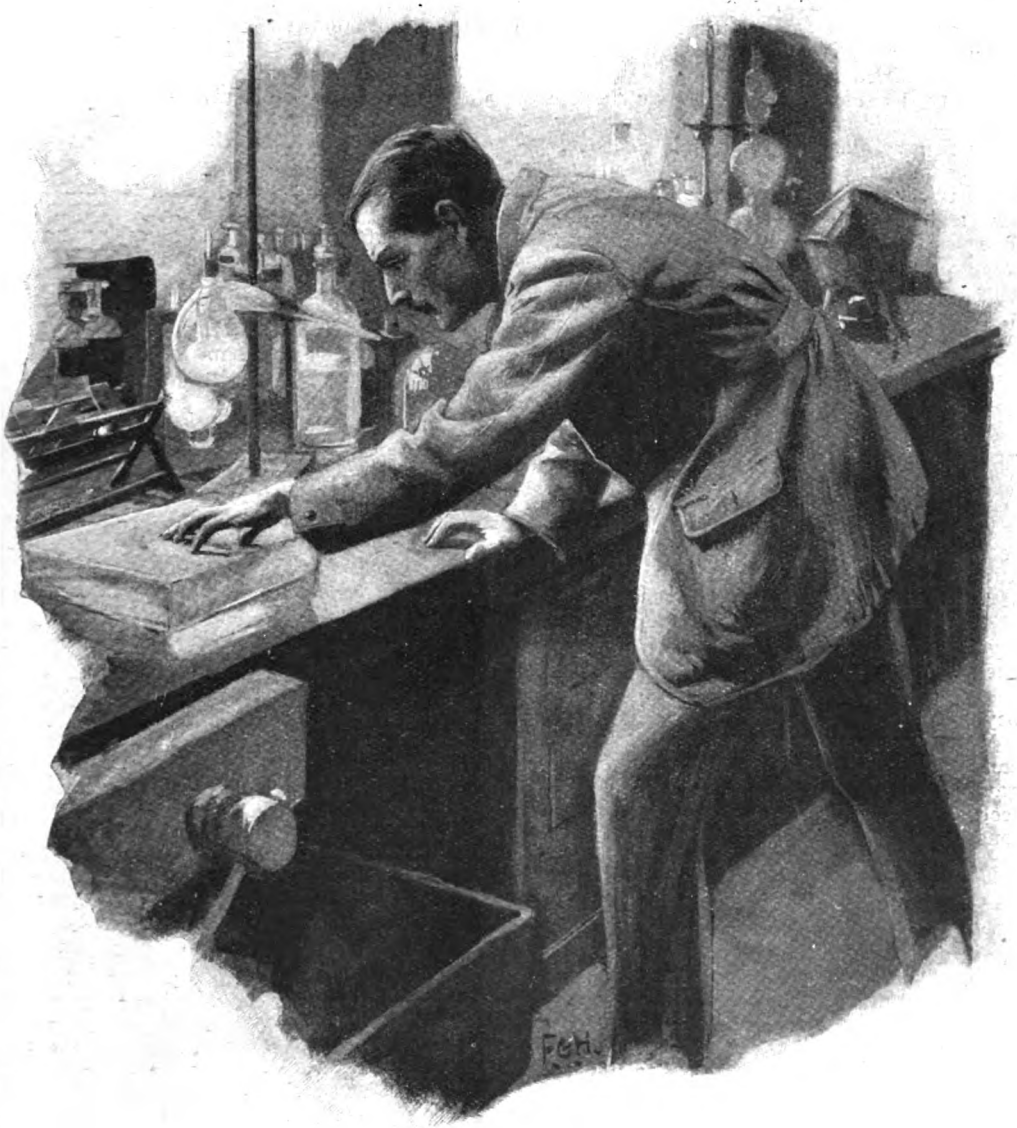
I must have been standing thus for quite a long time, lost in a teasing maze of speculative conjecture, when I became aware of a sharp burning pain on the back of my hand and, glancing down, saw that a ray of sunlight had appeared over the sloping roof of the outhouse and was falling upon the propped-up lens in such a way as to form a burning-glass whose focus coincided with the mortar.

Instinctively I snatched away my hand and held it to my lips, at the same time staring curiously at the bright spot of light that glowed like a fiery ember on the scintillating glass. And suddenly, in a flash, enlightenment came to me. I realized that I had stumbled upon the explanation of the mysterious explosion.

Uncle Nathan must have been in the act of mixing some of the Rodinite in the glass mortar. Possibly he had turned aside a moment—I recollected that the force of the discharge appeared to have caught him upon one side of the face only—and in the short time during which his attention had been diverted the first direct beam of morning sunlight must have appeared through the window, struck the lens, and fired the powder.

I looked at my watch—which happened to be an exceptionally good timekeeper—and I saw with a spasm of terrific excitement that it was exactly fourteen minutes past eleven. *And Uncle Silas had died at five minutes past!*

With my gaze fixed as though hypnotized upon the golden pool of light, I stood



With one tentative finger I disturbed a small patch of the dust film on the glass.

gripping the edge of the bench, every nerve in my body quivering painfully, a sound between a laugh and a shout trying to struggle up out of my throat.

Already the light was moving, losing the full intensity of its focus, slipping over the edge of the mortar. And as I watched it the thought stabbed into my mind: "The powder would have been in the hollowed-out centre, not on the edge!"

But six days ago the sun would have been nearly three degrees higher. The angle would have been a trifle wider. The ray would, in all probability, have fallen exactly in the centre!

Something reeled in my brain. For a while I seemed incapable of logical reasoning. Then, inevitably, another point presented itself. It was the middle of September. The window faced, as nearly as I could judge, almost due south—with the outhouse jutting from the eastern end of it. Each day the sun would appear not only at a lower angle—*but also at a later time!*

I took out a handkerchief and mopped my brow. The whole of my body seemed

to be suddenly damp with sweat. My hands shook as I fumbled for a notebook and pencil and began to make out a rough calculation of the daily difference of time that must be allowed for.

Finally, I came to the conclusion that it would be at least four minutes—and very likely as much as six. In which case that first beam must have appeared anything up to thirty-six minutes earlier on September 14th, which brought the probable time of the explosion to somewhere about twenty minutes to eleven—nearly half an hour before the time when Silas Cadwell was definitely known to have breathed his last.

Mechanically I put the notebook back into my pocket, turned away from the bench, and buried my face in my hands. The feeling of disappointment was intense, the reaction from soaring triumph to uttermost despair the bitterest I have ever experienced.

When at length I raised my eyes, the sun had swung itself clear into the dazzling canopy of heaven and was pouring its flood of shimmering gold across the littered floor of the workshop. With an effort I pulled myself together, thrust my hands into my pockets, and plunged off through the gap in the wall into the green heart of the woods beyond.

Where I was going I neither knew nor cared. My one desire was for action. It gave me a certain primitive satisfaction to feel twigs snapping under my tread. I longed to smash things, to give way to some form of physical violence, to find some outlet for the unbearable strain of my feelings.

And as I went I thought of Valda, of all the bright dreams that had been tentatively shaping in my mind during the past two days. One by one, like wistful ghosts, I watched them fade and vanish. A feeling of rage supplanted my despair.

It must have been quite late in the afternoon when I found myself walking down a steep hill into a village. I had had nothing to eat since early morning, and the sight of an inn provoked a sudden feeling of ravenous hunger. Going into a deserted parlour, I rang a bell, ordered a meal of bread and cheese and beer, and filled in the time waiting for its arrival by glancing through a pile of somewhat ancient newspapers.

I had turned over a sheet of one of the previous Sunday's picture papers, and was wondering if I dare venture to ring the bell again—with the idea of accelerating the service—when I found my attention suddenly and startlingly arrested. From a mass of printed words a single heading stood out with dramatic effect. As though the letters were letters of fire, they blazed and danced before my staring eyes.

They ran as follows :—

" SUMMER TIME ENDS TO-NIGHT.
Clocks Back One Hour at Midnight ! "

An indescribable sensation swept over me. The blood beat like a hammer in my temples. I heard myself laughing—weakly, hysterically.

I had forgotten to make allowance for the difference between summer time and ordinary time. Consequently, by the clock, it must have been somewhere about twenty minutes to twelve, instead of twenty minutes to eleven, that Uncle Nathan had met his death !

VERY little remains to be told.

The explosion—upon which so much depended—was eventually proved to have taken place at approximately twenty-two and a half minutes before midday, summer time—about twenty-seven minutes after the death of Silas Cadwell. The fortune thus passed first to the younger brother and then to myself.

I would also like to add that, for once in a way, Uncle Nathan was right about the value of his discovery. Only a few days ago I had a conversation with Sir Morris Stetson, of the War Office. From him I learnt that most favourable reports have been made upon the substance Rodinite, and that in all probability the Government will shortly be prepared to negotiate with me for the purchase of the formula.

" And to think that all *that* money might have been lost, too ! " my wife commented in awestruck tones, when I told her about it. " Why, it—it's too awful to contemplate! Just supposing someone had moved those things on the bench before you got there ! "

I slid an arm about her shoulders, holding her against me as we sat snugly side by side on the big Chesterfield.

" It *was* rather a close shave," I admitted. " Yes ! By Jove, it was ! And the most wonderful part of all is *this*—you and I—at last ! " There followed a short ruminative pause before I added : " Tell me, sweetheart, are you happy ? I mean, as happy as you *thought* you'd be ? "

Valda sighed, a blissful sigh of absolute content.

" There'd have to be a new language invented—to tell you *how* happy," she said.

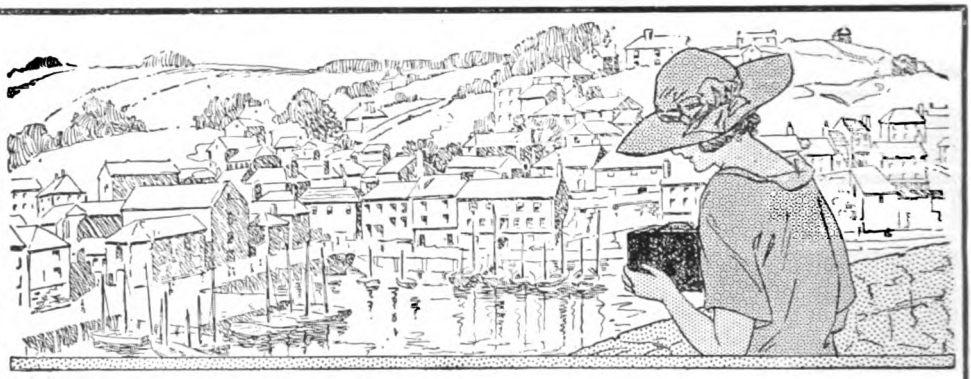
My arm increased its pressure. Her head slid forward into its favourite cubby-hole under my chin. Over the soft glow of her hair I stared dreamily into the red heart of the fire.

JUN 3 1924

WHITSUN HOLIDAY NUMBER

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

A. CONAN DOYLE
"SAPPER" F. BRITTEN AUSTIN
H. A. VACHELL W. J. GEORGE



FREE—
A REAL CAMERA

Here is the opportunity—the Hawk-Eye—a film pack camera made by the Eastman Kodak Co., which takes photographs 3¼ by 2¼. It is loaded in daylight, and any film can be taken out in a dark room and developed separately without disturbing the others. It is a camera without price, as it cannot be bought.

All you have to do is to save 100 wrappers of Wright's Coal Tar Soap. Each Tablet is wrapped with an outside printed wrapper and an inside plain wrapper, and they count as two. 50 tablets of soap, therefore, will contain the necessary 100 wrappers.

WRIGHT'S
COAL TAR
SOAP

The Ideal Soap for Toilet and Nursery Use.

Send them to Camera Dept. 100,
WRIGHT, LAYMAN & UMNEY, LTD.,
SOUTHWARK, LONDON, S.E.1.

Hawk-Eye owners are also eligible for the monthly competition run by the "Kodak Magazine." For further particulars see the "Kodak Magazine," copies of which can be obtained from any Kodak dealer.

WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

100 CASH PRIZES

1st Prize	**£5**	**5**	**0**	
2nd Prize	**£3**	**3**	**0**	
3rd Prize	**£2**	**2**	**0**	
97 Prizes of	**£1**	**1**	**0**	**each**

No Wrappers required to Compete.

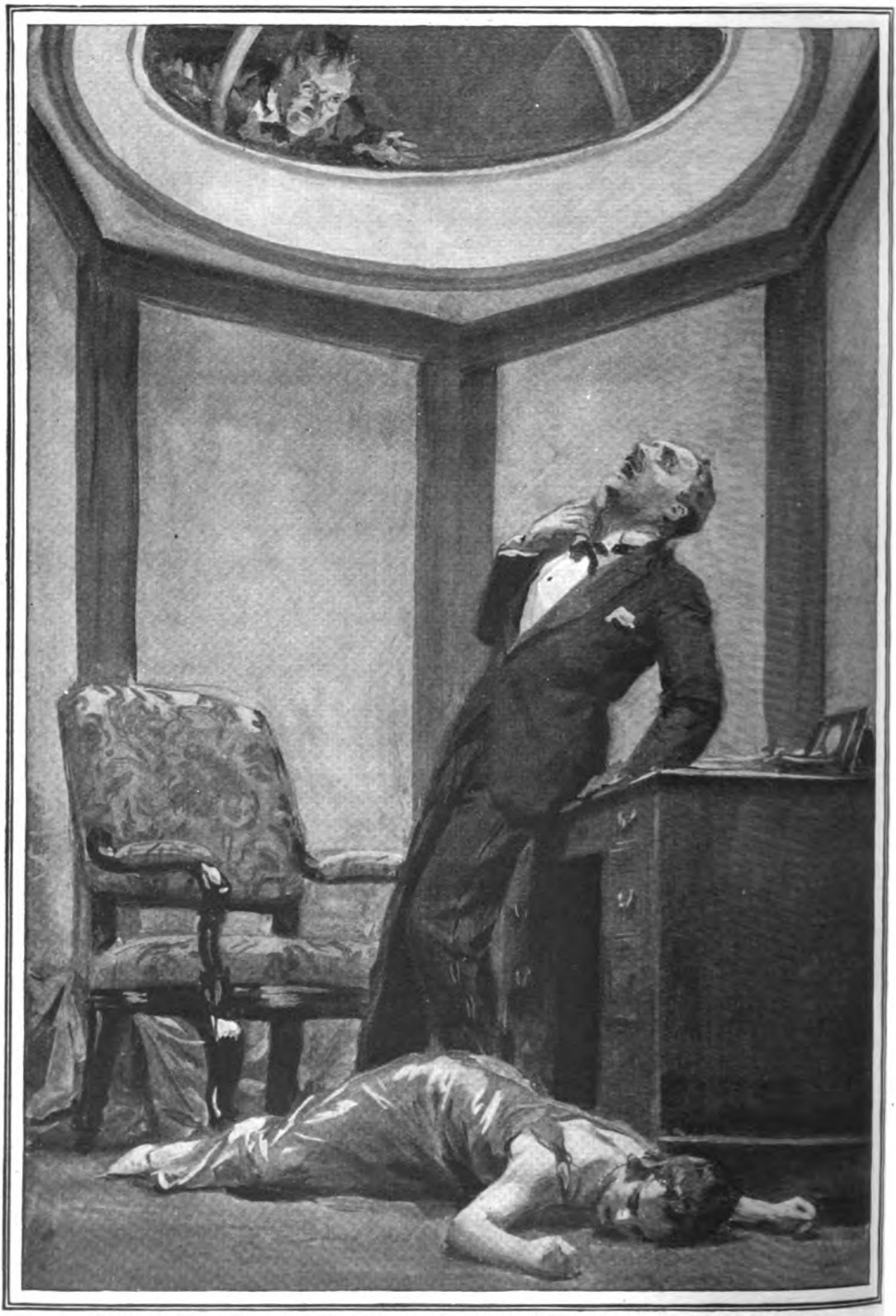
RULES.

1. *The Competition is restricted to those who have received Hawk-Eye Cameras from the proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap.*
2. Contact prints only are eligible. Prints may be mounted or unmounted, but the outside size of any mount must not exceed 8in. by 6in.
3. Competitors may send in as many entries as they like, but the subject and the full name and address of each competitor must be written on the back of each picture.
4. Every picture entered *must have been taken on Kodak 3¼ by 2¼ Film Pack* by the competitor, though he or she need not have done the developing, printing, or mounting.
5. Entries must be addressed to Photo Competition, Wright's Coal Tar Soap, 48, Southwark Street, London, S.E.1, and must arrive not later than August 30th, 1924. The result will be advertised in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Chronicle* on Sept. 30th.
6. The proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap reserve to themselves the right of purchasing the copyright of any of the photographs sent for £2 2s. each.
7. Kodak Limited will act as judges to the Competition, and their decision must be accepted as final.
8. Competitors may choose any of the following subjects, and the prizes will be awarded to the pictures that best illustrate the spirit of the title; photographic excellence or technical quality will not count—it is the picture that will win the prize.

SUBJECTS.

Children at Play. Pets.
A Day with a Hawk-Eye.
Sports and Pastimes.
Boy Scouts or Girl Guides.
Outdoors in Spring.
Nature Study.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
June, 1924.



HE PLUCKED AT HIS COLLAR, AND STAGGERED WILDLY BACK AGAINST THE DESK; THEN HE RAISED IMPLORING HANDS TO GARLING.

(*See page 544.*)

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

by

"SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

FOR the twentieth time Hilda Garling asked herself the same question—Why had her husband asked Jack Denver to stay? Mechanically she helped herself to some dish which the footman was handing to her, hardly knowing what it was she took. Why had he asked Jack to stay?

Such a thing was so completely foreign to her husband's habits of late. For the last year or so he had grown more and more of a recluse, shutting himself away for hours and even days at a time, and having his meals served in his own room, until the big house standing back from the Portsmouth road had seemed a veritable prison to his wife. Not that it was much better when her husband did come out of his seclusion, but at any rate he was a human being of her own class.

She had tried asking people to stay, but it wasn't a success. When your host plainly shows you that your presence fails to amuse him, even the most thick-skinned guest begins to look up the trains for London. She had tried going away to stay with friends, but that was only a temporary panacea. And then a year ago even that relief had been denied her. Her husband had complained once or twice of a pain in the chest, and although he scouted the idea that it was anything but indigestion, he at length agreed to do as she wished and send for a doctor. And the doctor had spoken to her after his examination.

"Mrs. Garling," he said, "I am sorry to have to be the bearer of—I won't say bad, but of serious news. It is no mere question of indigestion, I fear. It is heart trouble—and it is pronounced. Please understand me. There is no reason, if your husband lives a quiet life and avoids excitement or undue exertion of all sorts, why he shouldn't live for another twenty or thirty years. But any sudden physical call on his system—and the chances are, I am afraid, it would kill him."

"Have you told my husband?" she asked him.

"Not quite as clearly as I have told you," answered the doctor. "But he is fully aware that his condition is more serious than he thought."

From that time on she had hardly ever slept a night away from the Pines. For Hilda Garling had the instinct of playing the game very fully developed. It was hypocrisy to pretend to herself that she loved him: looking back on the five years of their married life she realized that she never had loved him. Like so many girls fresh from the schoolroom, she had been captivated by a brilliantly clever and handsome man some fourteen years older than herself. She had thought herself in love with him, and her parents, having inquired into Hubert Garling's social and financial status, and having found both—especially the latter—eminently satisfactory, had put no obstacle in the way of what seemed to them a very desirable match.

But even before the honeymoon was over disillusion had begun to set in. That Hubert had a jealous nature she had found out while they were engaged, and then she had been rather flattered by it. But until they were married she never realized how fiendishly jealous he was. Once at Nice, as they were on their way home, she had danced twice with a young French officer, and the scene that night in their room had been appalling. It had blown over, as such scenes do, but it had left an indelible mark. It had frightened the girl—she was still

Copyright, 1924, by H. C. McNeile.

only a child at the time ; but it had hastened her mental development far more than a year of ordinary life. To her amazement she had found herself listening to Hubert's whispered apologies and love-makings with only half her mind. The other half was disconcertingly cold and logical.

" This is insulting," it said. " You may be his ; in a way, since you're his wife, you are. But an outlook on life that forbids you to dance with someone else, and gets furious if you do, is mediæval."

As time went on it got no better. The slightest sign of interest in another man was sufficient to precipitate either a furious scene or sullenness, until Hilda for very peace' sake confined her male acquaintanceship to the old vicar of seventy-two and the doctor, who was three years younger. And the absurd thing about it all was that there had never been the tiniest particle of justification for her husband's attitude ; never, that is, until——

Again she asked herself the question—Why had he asked Jack Denver to stay ? He was talking now to his guest in that charming, well-bred manner of his that had captivated so many people—talking well and interestingly, as a glance at Jack's face revealed, though she hadn't heard a word that had been said for the last ten minutes. It was incredible, impossible, that Hubert could know ; after all, what was there to know ? Six months ago, on one of her rare visits to London, she had stayed the night with an old school friend—Joan Prettyman. Mr. Prettyman, Joan's father, had tactfully gone up to Manchester on business, and Joan had greeted her with a shout of joy.

" My dear," she cried, " in you lies salvation ! Cecil Turnbury, who dances like an angel, rang me up this morning to dine and wine, do a show, trek on to Ciro's, and come home with the milk from a night club. I know it will come to the old man's ears if I go alone with Cecil ; you must come, too. I'll ring up Cecil now, and tell him to rope in a cheery soul for you."

For a moment or two she had feebly protested ; she couldn't dance—her husband—she must get back.

" Tripe ! " remarked Joan, elegantly, and forthwith rang up Cecil. And he had arrived at seven-thirty with Jack Denver. From the outset of the evening it was quite clear what was going to happen. Joan, having taken the possible wind out of father's sails, devoted herself exclusively to Cecil, leaving Jack Denver and Hilda to carry on their share of the good work. And Hilda, starved, though she hardly realized it, for the companionship of men of her own age, had the night of her life. There are nights which stand out like milestones in every life, and almost always are they impromptu. And there had been singularly few for Hilda Garling. But in those eight hours she realized fully for the first time all that she had missed in marrying Hubert.

JACK DENVER was thirty and in the Army. Moreover, he was a man's man all through. London saw him but rarely, except when he was playing polo at Ranelagh or Hurlingham ; he found that London life interfered with his eye. But in addition to being mad on every form of sport he was —without being clever—exceedingly intelligent. He was interested in politics and life generally ; he read with discrimination. He could talk amusingly, and, most precious of all gifts, listen sympathetically. And that night, having gone merely to please Cecil and swearing he must be in bed by one, he found himself wishing at half-past three that it could go on for another four hours. From the time they arrived at Ciro's, it had been merely two duets.

From Ciro's they had driven to the night club in two taxis—Joan, being quite without shame, had insisted on that. And during the drive Jack Denver tried to take stock of matters. That Hilda was married he knew ; that her husband was a bit of a rum 'un he knew also from Joan. But there was another thing also which he knew, and that was that never in the course of his life had he been so powerfully attracted by any woman before.

Small wonder. Hilda—enjoying herself to the hilt—looked utterly lovely. But it wasn't only a question of looks ; she was so startlingly alive. The stagnation of months had boiled over in an immense reaction. And if there was one thing which Jack Denver worshipped, it was vitality.

They left the night club at half-past three, and once more two taxis were requisitioned.

" Have you enjoyed yourself ? " he asked quietly as they drove off.

" It's been heaven ! " she answered.

Which, taken as a conversational effort, would not have won a prize. But when the atmosphere is electrical, it doesn't much matter what is said.

" Mrs. Garling," he went on, gravely, " when may I see you again ? "

By the light of a passing lamp she saw his eyes fixed on her, and her own did not falter.

" I don't think we'd better meet again," she said, steadily. " My husband has rather peculiar ideas on the subject."

" That, of course, is quite unthinkable," he remarked. " I have never enjoyed such a wonderful evening before."

" No more have I," she said, staring out of the window.

She felt his hand close over hers, and for a while she made no effort to remove it. Then with a little shiver she almost snatched her hand away.

"Captain Denver," she said, "this is folly. I must tell you that my husband is almost crazily jealous of me. If he were to know that you and I were driving home at this hour of the night in a taxi alone, I think he'd probably try to—try to kill me. It sounds incredible, but it's the truth. He becomes like a madman if I even speak to another man; in fact, there have been times when I really believe he has been out of his senses."

"But it's preposterous," he said, angrily. "He can't keep you shut up like a prisoner."

"He would if he could," she answered.

"A truce to this fooling, Hilda," said Denver, urgently. "We're nearly at your house. I must see you again; I *must*. It may be folly, or it may not. I know I only met you eight hours ago—what's that matter? Time has no meaning on some occasions. I'm being crude, too; I know that, but the circumstances make it imperative. May I motor over from Aldershot and call on you?"

"I'll ring up Cecil now, and tell him to rope in a cheery soul for you."

The taxi was already slowing up.

"It's madness," she whispered, "absolute madness."

"Then I'm going to be mad," he remarked quietly, as the car stopped.

The other taxi was just behind them, and for a moment or two they all stood talking on the pavement. Then, with a prodigious yawn, Joan voted for bed, and the two girls went indoors.

"A gladsome night," she said, sleepily. "And it strikes me, Hilda, my dear, that for a little sheltered country rose you're a pretty high-class performer. He's a pet, that man Denver; in fact, I'd have changed over half-way through if I hadn't known there wasn't a look-in for little Joan. Did he kiss you in the bus coming home?"

"Joan—how can you ask such a thing?" cried Hilda, blushing furiously.

"Cut it out, my angel—cut it out. If he didn't he's a mutt—and so are you. Heigh-ho! bed for this child."

TRUE to his word, Jack Denver drove his car over from Aldershot to the Pines three days later. He stayed to tea and talked more to Hubert than to her. And after tea he suggested a spin to Hindhead and the Devil's Punch-bowl.

"I'm afraid an open car is one of the things I'm forbidden," said Hubert.

"Then what about you, Mrs. Garling?" asked Jack.

"My wife doesn't care about motoring," said her husband, harshly.

A truly impossible fellow, reflected Jack, as he drove back to barracks. Charming in other respects—but on the subject of his wife quite impossible. And deep down inside a warning voice began to make itself heard—a voice that counselled caution. With a husband like that the most ordinary everyday politeness would be misconstrued. And Jack Denver was quite sufficiently honest with himself to realize that, if he saw much of Hilda Garling, he would have considerable difficulty in keeping things on the plane of conventional courtesy. In fact, as he dressed for mess that night he apostrophized his reflection in the glass in no uncertain manner.

"You're nine-tenths of the way towards falling in love with another man's wife. And that's a complication at the best of times. But, with a husband like that, it's the devil. So take a pull at yourself, young feller; take a pull."

And a pull he did take—for quite a fort-

night. Then, as luck would have it, duty took him to Portsmouth. He couldn't get back to Aldershot the same night, and the following morning he started back in his car. And as he got near the Pines his pace grew slower and slower. Finally he stopped and lit a cigarette.

"Don't be a fool," said one voice. "Go on; there's polo at the club this afternoon."

"You've played polo every day for the last week," said another voice. "The man can't eat you if you ask for lunch. Don't be a coward."

And since it's better to be called a fool than a coward, the second voice won. Jack Denver went to the Pines for the second time. And when he left at about five o'clock the nine-tenths had changed to nineteen-twentieths.

Of course, the thing was a foregone conclusion. He got into the habit of going about once a week, and one day it all came out with a rush—like a stream that had been temporarily dammed.

They were in the garden—the two of them, and something seemed suddenly to snap.

"Come away with me, my darling," he muttered. "This man is an impossible husband for you. I've got plenty of money, and I'm chucking the service, anyhow."

He tried to take her in his arms, but she drew back.

"Don't, dear, don't," she said, a little breathlessly. "It's impossible."

"Why is it impossible?" he demanded. "You love me, Hilda—I know that. And I worship the very ground you walk on. Why is it impossible?"

"Because it would kill Hubert," she answered, steadily. "I've never told you before, Jack, but I must now. You merely thought he was delicate. It's his heart; and any sudden shock would kill him. And we couldn't do that, Jack—could we?"

"And if it wasn't for that?" he asked, dully.

She took a deep breath.

"If it wasn't for that, my man," she whispered, "I'd go to the end of the world with you to-morrow."

And, being a white man, Jack Denver merely raised her fingers to his lips and left her. It was final; it was unalterable, and it was not for him to make it harder. She heard his car drive away, and she gave a little sobbing cry. Then very steadily she walked into the house.

From that day to this she hadn't seen Jack; that had been all. All, that is, except one thing—the one thing which would have supplied the answer to her oft-repeated question. A minute after she had walked into the house a man stepped out of some bushes close to where she had been standing. At first glance it would have been hard to recognize who it was; his face was so distorted with devilish fury that he looked like a fiend. For a while he stood there, his fists tight clenched. Then he suddenly swayed, and instinctively one hand went to his heart. The fury was replaced by agony—which in its turn gave way to relief. And shortly after Hubert Garling, outwardly calm, followed his wife indoors.

That had been three months ago. And three days ago he had done the amazingly unexpected thing.

They were having lunch, and he suddenly asked her about Jack.

"What's become of that nice fellow Denver?" he remarked. "We never seem to see him now."

"I don't know," she answered, calmly, though she felt that all the colour had left her face. "Perhaps he's on leave or manœuvres or something."

"Why don't you write and ask him to come over?" continued her husband. "Ask him over for the week-end."

"I'll write, certainly," she said, and wondered whether he could hear the pounding of her heart.

"The workmen are away from the tower, you know," he went on; "and he seemed an amusing chap."

"I'll write after lunch," she said, quietly.

And thus it came about that Jack Denver received the following morning a letter in a writing that made his hand shake uncontrollably as he opened the envelope.

"*My man,*" it ran,—

"*Hubert, for some astounding reason, is anxious for you to come and stay. As for me—I think I shall go mad if I don't see you again soon. If you think it unwise, plead duty as an excuse. But I think you'll have to come soon, or else the sudden cessation of your visits here will make H. suspicious. Come for the week-end.*

"*H. G.*"

He stared at his untasted breakfast; then he shrugged his shoulders. So be it. And his answer was duly delivered at the Pines.

"*Dear Mrs. Garling,*—

"*How charming of you! I fear you must have thought I was dead, but we do work—sometimes! I'll come in time for lunch on Saturday if I may.*

"*Yours sincerely,*

"JACK DENVER."

AND now dinner was over, and she was still as far as ever from getting the answer to her question, Why had Hubert done it? All through the afternoon he had been uniformly charming; he

couldn't suspect anything; he couldn't. He was talking now about the tower—a strange architectural freak which stuck up from one corner of the house like a funnel on a locomotive.

"It's an old house," he was saying in his cultured, rather gentle voice. "And I can't quite make out who erected that tower originally. It was put up after the house itself was built, but for what purpose is a little obscure. It certainly can't have been entirely erected as a tomb."

"A tomb!" echoed Denver in surprise. "In what way a tomb?"

"Has my wife never told you the story?" said Garling. "It's one of the stock things about this place. I can just remember when my father made the discovery. The tower, of course, is hollow, and it had been used as a sort of box-room. There were some rough steps going spirally round it which finished abruptly in the brick roof. And one day it struck my father that it was somewhat peculiar to make steps right up to a ceiling, and he took some measurements. And he found that there was a space of about ten feet to be accounted for at the top of the tower. You can understand, of course, that it was very rare indeed that anyone went there, or such an obvious thing would have been discovered before. So he got in some workmen and proceeded to remove the bricks from the roof. And the mystery was solved. The steps which apparently disappeared into the ceiling were now found to communicate with a room. And in that room the remnants of two skeletons were found. They had been there for at least a hundred years, but there was enough to prove that one had been a man and the other a woman."

"How very interesting!" said Denver. "Did your father ever find out what had happened?"

"Not for absolutely certain," answered his host. "But I have no doubt in my own mind that it was the truth. Apparently this house, at the time when the man and woman died, belonged to a man called Shaw. And Mrs. Shaw was a very lovely lady—a fact which other men beside Mr. Shaw appreciated. Moreover, it appeared that Mrs. Shaw was not insensible to the admiration of those other men—especially to that of a young Lord Greyton. Possibly she was flattered by the attentions of a member of the aristocracy, since her husband, though an eminently worthy man, was distinctly middle-class. At any rate, she and Lord Greyton disappeared, and were never heard of again. Mr. Shaw gave out that his wife had eloped with him, and forbade her name ever to be mentioned in his presence again. But I think there can be little doubt that somehow or other he trapped them both into the room at the top of the tower,

He tried to take her in his arms, but she drew back.

and then proceeded to brick them in. The details, of course, will never be known. Presumably he must have drugged them first, leaving them to regain consciousness in the black darkness—because there were no windows of any sort in the tower. One thing is certain: they were not dead when they were put there. The marks are plainly visible where they had endeavoured to scratch away the brickwork with their fingers."

"What an extraordinarily gruesome story!" said Denver. "Why, Mrs. Garling — you've gone quite pale."

"I think it's a horrible story," she said, in a low voice.

"Horrible—and yet full of poetic justice," remarked her husband, sipping his port.

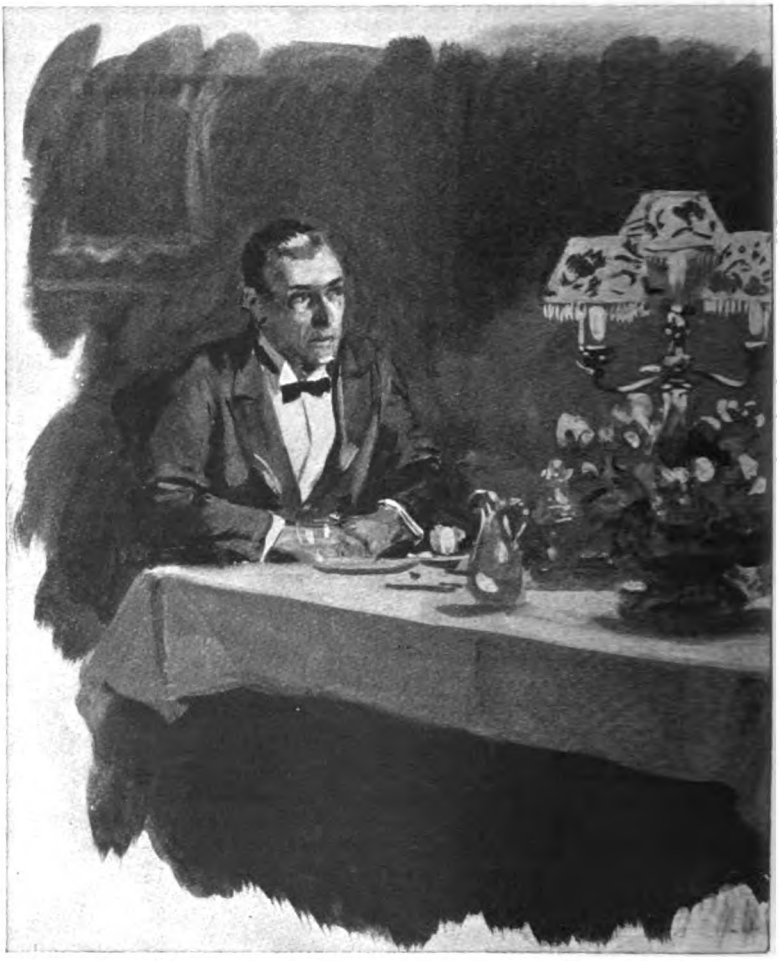
"And what do you use the tower for now?" asked Denver.

"My father, who was a keen astronomer, had it made into a small observatory. I've left it much as it was, except that I've removed the telescope and carried out a few small improvements. In fact, the workmen have only just finished. My father, for instance, had a sliding roof; I've had that removed. There is now merely a small dome with thick glass at the top, through which one can get a really wonderful view of the heavens."

He glanced at Denver's glass.

"Some more port? No. Well—would you care to come and see the actual room itself? And I particularly want you, my dear, to see it by artificial light." He turned to his wife. "I think you'll agree that it's an immense improvement. In fact, I'm seriously thinking of using it in future as my study. It's small, of course—in fact, tiny. But it's so far removed from any noise or disturbance. And I find, Denver, that I can concentrate better in a confined space."

He was leading the way along an upstair corridor as he talked.



"What an extraordinarily gruesome story!" said Denver.

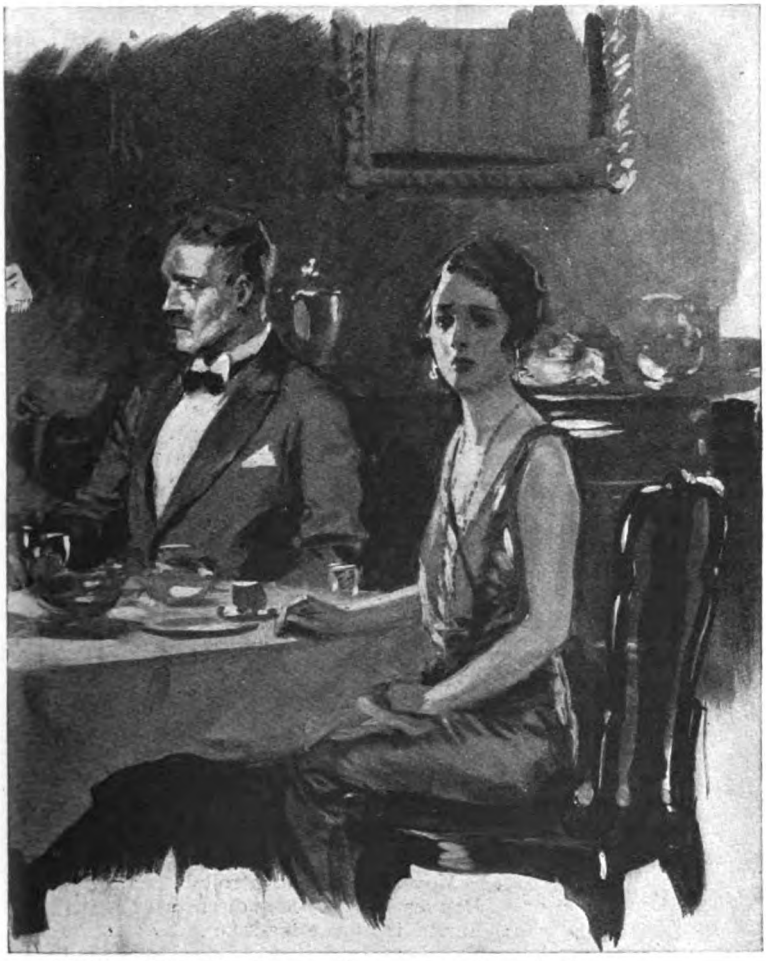
"I am a bit of a recluse, and I write a little. Dull, scientific stuff. And I really believe that in this room I have got my ideal working room."

He had reached the top of the stairs in the tower and opened the door.

"Quaint, isn't it? Those Chinese hangings round the walls give it a cosy effect. And then this door—sound-proof. I cannot hear any noise when I'm at work."

They were standing in the centre of the room, and Jack Denver looked round with frank curiosity. It certainly was quaint. Above their heads, through the glass dome,

he could see the sky glittering with stars—a magnificent view, as his host had said. A thick pile carpet covered the floor, and the only pieces of furniture were a heavy desk that filled half the room and a big chair. The electric light was concealed just



"Why, Mrs. Garling—you've gone quite pale."

where the dome commenced, and threw its direct rays upwards, giving a pleasant diffused light all over the room. And the walls—hexagonal in shape—were completely covered with rich yellow Oriental silk panels. A bizarre room—almost an uncanny room; yet with a strange element of fascination about it.

"There was one thing I omitted to mention at dinner in my little story," said Hubert Garling. "From what small study I have made of the matter, there can be no doubt that Mrs. Shaw and Lord Greyton died of suffocation. In fact, I once made a calculation that the supply of air would have lasted them about twelve hours. This room is half the original size."

"Poor brutes!" remarked Denver.

"Moreover," continued his host, "the fact that Mr. Shaw was unable to watch their death struggle must have robbed his revenge of much of its charm."

For a moment they saw his face—distorted, fiendish; then the door shut, and they were alone. Half stupefied they stared at one another; the whole thing was so sudden, so utterly unexpected. And it was the girl who recovered herself first and spoke.

"He knew, Jack," she whispered. "He's known all along. That's why he made me ask you here."

Denver swore softly under his breath; as yet he had not realized the danger.

"Damn him!" he said, angrily. "This is beyond a joke. We've done absolutely nothing of which we need be ashamed. Why, I've never even kissed you, Hilda." He went to the door and tugged at it; it refused to budge.

"Well, this settles it, my dear," he went on. "He may have a weak heart or he may not—but I don't stand for this form of humour. I shall tell your husband exactly what I think of him, and that you're going to come away with me. And he can take what steps he damn well chooses."

He lit a cigarette and began pacing up and down the little room with short, angry steps, while the girl, leaning against the desk, watched him with a strange look in her eyes.

"Jack, dear," she said at length, "I don't think you quite understand. This isn't a joke."

He stopped short in his tracks and stared at her.

"What do you mean?" he asked, in a low voice.

"This is dead earnest. He means to murder us."

The colour slowly left his face.

"Murder us?" he stammered, foolishly.

"That's why he told you that story at dinner to-night. That's why he's had men working on this tower, and didn't suggest that you should come over till they'd finished. That's why he's locked us in here."

"But, good God! Hilda, the man must be mad," he said, hoarsely.

"On the subject of me he is," she answered.

And still it seemed as if he could hardly realize.

"But someone must come," he cried, angrily. "He can't keep us shut in here for days."

She went across to him.

"Didn't you hear what he said as he went out? Suffocation. It took twelve hours for those two, and this is half the size. Six hours, Jack—six hours. And the servants are on the other side of the house."

And now at last he understood, and with the understanding he became himself again. He smiled thoughtfully, and pressed out his cigarette.

"Under those circumstances—no smoking. And under those circumstances also—no scruples either."

He caught the girl in his arms and kissed her again and again, while she clung to him half sobbing. Then, still with the same thoughtful smile, he pushed her gently into the chair.

"I must explore," he said, briefly.

FIRST of all—the door. Coolly he examined it, while the girl watched him with eager eyes. He seemed so calm and assured—so completely confident in himself.

A minute or two later he turned and looked at her.

"Nothing doing there," he said cheerfully. "It fits as tight as a safe door, and there isn't even a keyhole on this side. It must have some patent form of lock."

He went round the walls quietly and systematically, tearing down the silk panels as he got to them. Nothing but smooth cement—not a crack, not a fissure.

He stood on the desk to examine the roof. It was of flawless glass, immensely thick. And then he had to get down abruptly. He put his hand to his forehead; it was wet with perspiration.

And now the full gravity of the situation had come home to him. Mad, Hubert Garling might be; there was no sign of madness about this trap. It was diabolically efficient. It was small consolation to know that the murderer might be hanged; all that mattered was that he and the girl he loved were in an air-tight room, and that in a few hours that air would be exhausted.

He took off his shoe and hurled it with all his force at the glass above his head. For ten minutes he went on throwing it; then with a little gesture of despair he threw the shoe on the floor. The glass was too thick; he was only exhausting himself and using up precious oxygen uselessly.

"Supposing we shouted, Jack?" said the girl, quietly.

For a quarter of an hour they shouted "Help!" at intervals of half a minute. No one came; nothing happened.

"It's getting terribly stuffy, Jack," she whispered.

"Yes, darling; I'm afraid it is," he answered, steadily.

He was sitting on the arm of her chair—thinking desperately. Was there no way out? Was there nothing to be done?

"He can't mean to kill us like this," she cried, in despair.

He bent and kissed her gently, and she clung to him like a frightened child.

And so they sat for twenty minutes or more, till suddenly the girl clutched his arm.

"Jack," she whispered, "look up. Oh, my God, look at him!"

She cowered back in the chair, and the man beside her, strong-nerved though he was, shuddered uncontrollably. For staring down on them from above, with his face pressed against the glass, was Hubert Garling. He was crawling over the smooth surface like some loathsome insect—gloating as he watched them.

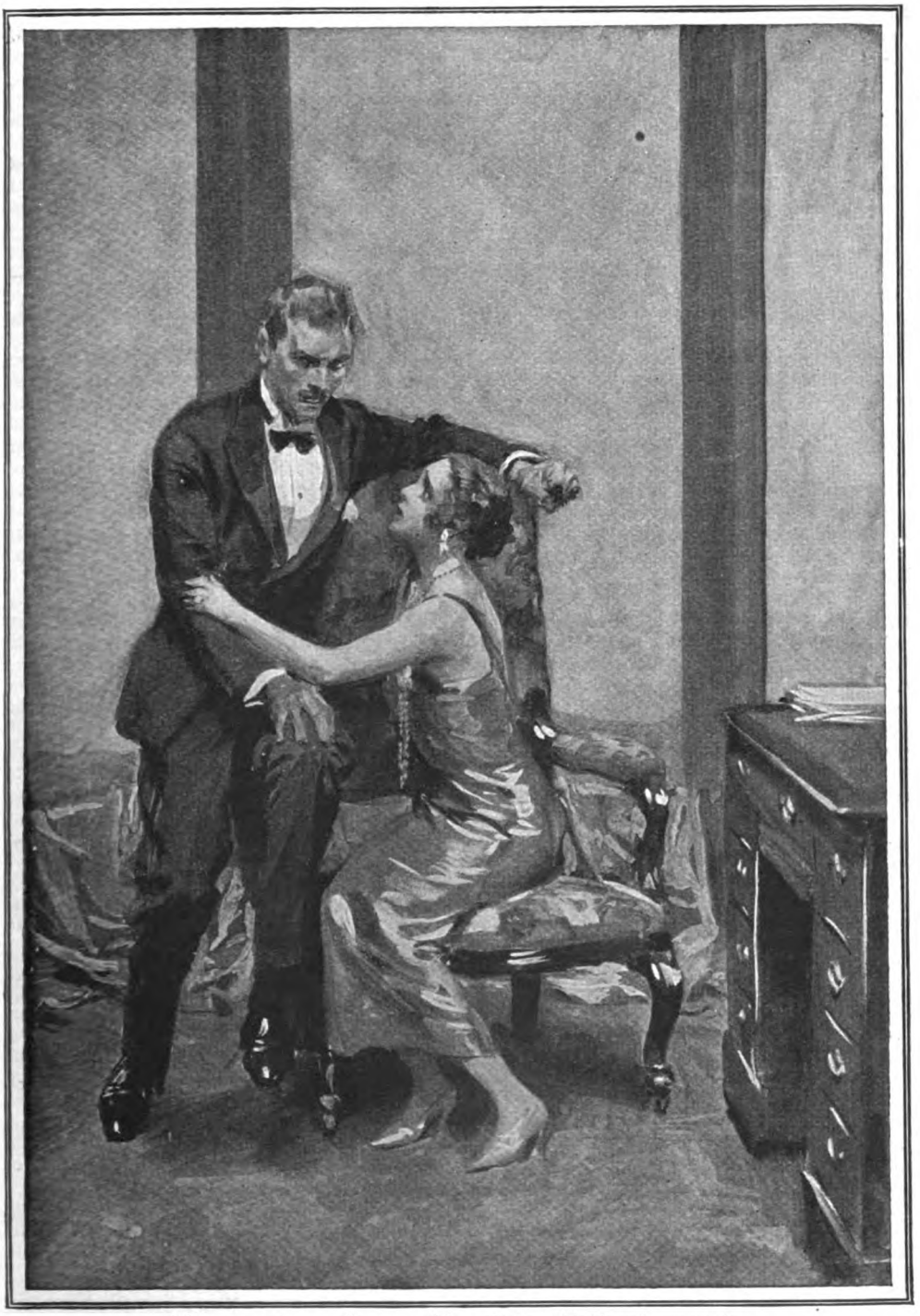
Moved by an uncontrollable impulse, Jack Denver seized his discarded shoe and hurled it at the madman. So straight was the aim that they could see him start back; then, as the shoe dropped harmlessly back to the floor, Garling's face once more pressed against the glass. And he was shaking with maniacal laughter.

"Turn off the light, dear," sobbed the girl. "I can't bear it."

There was a click and the tower was in darkness.

"Hold me in your arms, darling," she cried, pitifully. "I'm not frightened when you've got me close."

Jack Denver took her in his arms almost mechanically: into his mind had come an idea. Above them, outlined against the sky, they could see Garling, and it seemed as if he was beating furiously against the glass



He was sitting on the arm of her chair—thinking desperately.
"He can't mean to kill us like this," she cried, in despair.

with his fists, enraged at being baulked of his triumph.

"Listen, sweetheart," said Jack, urgently. "There's a chance. Just a chance. If he thinks we're dead it's possible he might come in and open the door. I want you to sprawl forward on the floor—face downwards. Don't move. Just lie there. Then I'll switch on the light, stagger round the room once or twice, and then fall myself. Act, my beloved, act as you have never acted before."

"I understand, dear," she answered, steadily. "Just kiss me once more." He strained her to him; then she lay down on the floor half hidden by the desk.

"Ready, Hilda?"

"Yes, Jack; I'm ready."

ONCE more the light went on, and Jack Denver stared upwards. Act—oh, God!—let him act sufficiently to deceive the madman. He plucked at his collar, and staggered wildly back against the desk; then he raised imploring hands to Garling. His breath came in short gasps; he went to the door and beat on it. Then again he raised his hands towards the gibbering, gloating face, transformed now with a sort of diabolical ecstasy into something utterly fiendish.

Then he pitched forward on his face—turned over, and lay staring through half-closed eyes at the man above. Had they bluffed him? Garling's face was still pressed against the glass; his eyes roamed from one to the other of his victims.

A quarter of an hour—eternity—went by, and he was still there. And then quite suddenly he was gone; the stars shone through the dome clear and unimpeded. For five minutes Jack Denver remained motionless; then, still lying in the same position, he spoke in a whisper.

"He's gone, darling; but don't move yet. If he comes in, I'll go for him, but whatever happens you get on the other side of the door."

"All right, Jack; but pray Heaven he comes soon. I don't think I can go on much longer."

Again eternity passed: the door was still shut. He wasn't coming; the acting had been in vain. Hubert Garling had seen, as he thought, their agony before they became unconscious; now he was going to make quite certain they were dead before he bothered with them further.

And with a dreadful feeling of physical sickness Jack Denver realized that, though the acting had been in vain, it had been a wonderful dress-rehearsal. Even so, in reality, would Hilda pitch forward and lie still; even so would he tear at his collar and fight for the air which was not there.

The girl had risen, and he rose too, and went to her.

"He's not coming, Jack," she said, steadily. "We've failed."

"Yes, dear—I'm afraid we've failed."

"So this is the end."

He made no answer; only put his arm round her waist and held her tightly.

"I'm not frightened, my man," she went on, quietly. "I expect I'll go first, but you'll find me waiting for you over the other side of the valley."

He cried aloud in his agony of mind; already he felt as if an iron band was pressing round his head.

"Oh, God!—if I could only get a message through somehow."

And even as his prayer went up, his eyes rested on the electric light switch. He'd seen it fifty times before; he'd used it in that last despairing throw for safety; and now—he stared at it as if he'd seen it for the first time. Fool that he was—idiot, not to have thought of it before. The tower could be seen from the road, even if he couldn't be heard from there. And it was the only chance. He turned off the light: then he began to signal.

Three short bursts of light; three long ones; three short again. S.O.S. Then HELP in Morse. Again and again S.O.S. HELP. S.O.S. HELP.

And the iron band round his head grew tighter and tighter. How long he went on he had no idea; time was measured only by the click of the switch—on and off. Dimly he realized that the girl had got to her feet, and with a dreadful look in her face was staggering towards him. He felt her clutch hold of his arm; from a great distance he heard her voice:—

"Jack—I can't breathe; I can't——"

Her grip relaxed, and she collapsed on the floor at his feet, struggling horribly to breathe.

S.O.S. HELP. S.O.S. HELP.

Slower and slower the message flashed out into the night, until, at last, it ceased altogether. And Jack Denver's knees gave from under him. With one last effort he turned off the light; then he crumpled up on the floor beside the woman he loved.

AND so they found them—two naval officers, one of whom, by the mercy of Allah, was a doctor.

"My God!" he gasped, as they flung open the door and the atmosphere inside hit them. "Get 'em into the fresh air, Flags; and for Heaven's sake—hurry."

"Are they dead, Doc.?" cried his companion, as they laid the two unconscious bodies by an open window.

"No—but damned near it." He looked

thoughtfully at his brother officer. "Go down and see what's happened to that madman below, old boy. I'll look after these two."

The Flag-Lieutenant went, to return in a few moments with a face that was strangely white.

"Doc.," he muttered, "he's dead. Halfway along the passage there."

The doctor got up quickly and followed the other. And for a while he stood looking at Hubert Garling's face, that stared with unseeing eyes at the ceiling.

"Heart, Flags, or I'm a Dutchman," he said. "The struggle to get the key did for him."

They covered the distorted face with a pocket-handkerchief, and went back to the living. And it was a couple of minutes before either of them spoke again.

"May Heaven be praised, old man," said the doctor, "that we decided to motor back to Portsmouth and not stop in town. It strikes me there have been some funny things happening here to-night."

"Where the devil are the servants, anyway?" demanded his pal.

"We'll get them shortly," said the other. "And the police, too. Don't forget, old man, we killed that bloke between us. It was the only thing to do: he was crazy. But it's a police matter."

"What is?" Jack Denver's hoarse croak made them both swing round. He was sitting up, swaying a little, and the doctor hurried to him.

"Feeling better?" he said. "That's good."

Denver pushed him away.

"How's Hilda—how's Mrs. Garling?"

"Going fine. She hasn't come round yet—but she will soon. There she is, beside you."

FOR a moment Denver looked at her, then he got up unsteadily.

"I don't know who you are," he said, "but there's a man in this house I'm going to kill."

The two naval officers looked at one another.

"Steady, old chap," said the Flag-Lieutenant. He followed Denver along the passage. "Unless I'm much mistaken, he's dead already."

They paused by the body, and he lifted the pocket-handkerchief from the dead man's face.

"Is that the man?"

"It is," said Denver. "How did it happen?"

"It doesn't take long to tell," answered the other. "We were motoring back from town, and suddenly we saw your signals. At first we paid no attention, and then—being a Flag-Lieutenant myself—I took them in automatically. S.O.S. Help. We rushed into the house and found that man in the hall downstairs. He was crazy—or so it seemed to us. Told us you were dead by now: and if you weren't you were going to die. Brandished a key in front of our faces, and roared with laughter. We were on him like a knife, and, I can tell you, he put up a fight. But we got the key, and we got to you in time."

"She's coming-to," said the doctor's voice from just behind them.

For a moment Jack Denver stared at them both.

"I won't try and thank you now," he said, quietly. "I'll do that and explain everything shortly. But when you've been into the valley of the shadow with someone, and come out first, it's good to welcome your fellow-voyager."

He turned and went back to Hilda Garling. And when, a few seconds later, she opened her eyes, it was into his that they stared. His arms were round her, and he was smiling.

"Jack," she whispered, exultingly, "it wasn't so terrible, was it? And we're together after all."

For a moment he didn't understand: then it came to him.

"Dear heart," he said, tenderly. "We're not dead: we're alive."

In certain articles entitled "As I Know Them," by Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott, which appeared in the last August, October, and November numbers of "The Strand Magazine," Miss Violet Hunt is referred to as Mrs. Hueffer. We are requested to state that Mrs. Elsie Hueffer, and not Miss Violet Hunt, is the wife of Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer.

PORTRAITS IN PENCIL AND PEN

BY

Walter Tittle

III.

ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS FROM LIFE, MADE AT SITTINGS SPECIALLY GIVEN TO THE ARTIST.

JOSEPH CONRAD.

AS I sat one evening in the lounge of my hotel in London my attention was attracted by the entrance of a man whose appearance seemed very familiar. "Conrad," I said to myself after a further glance, but changed my mind when I heard him address one of two women who were with him. His accent was somewhat foreign, and I concluded I was mistaken. Besides, there was a gnarled, grizzled something about this man that the polite product of the photographer had never revealed. Poland seemed too far away still to colour his speech to any extent.

The next morning at breakfast with a friend, Mr. Conrad's name came into our conversation. I said that I would greatly enjoy meeting him, and that he would make an excellent subject for a portrait sketch. "Well," said my friend, "this should not be so difficult of achievement. He is sitting just two tables away."

As I passed from the breakfast-room into the lounge he was walking up and down, and to my surprise looked at me with a pleasant smile and nod of his head. I wished him a good morning, calling him by name, and was invited to sit down. He was in London a few days while his house in the country was being painted and decorated, he said.

Long hours each day he was spending with his secretary, and he showed the result of the strain. He spoke much of fatigue, his eyes showed evidence of it, and he talked nervously of much to do and little time in which to do it. Yet his manner was quite gay and exceedingly animated; his utterances came in a romping torrent with a very considerable expenditure of nervous energy.

There is something instantly lovable about Joseph Conrad. He is possessed of an enthusiastic, happy cordiality that carries with it the deepest conviction. On subsequent mornings, when our breakfast hours coincided, he would rush forward with the warmest greetings, shaking my hands in both of his, with a smile on his expressive face that was a pleasure to see. Alertness, burning energy, humour, transcendent intelligence, and abundant kindliness are there. When he gives of himself there is no stinting. All the features of his face could be described as salient, so vigorous are they and developed. His long head sets obliquely and forward on his shoulders, the protruding chin and the back of his head being the poles of the longest axis. His nose is large, as are his ears, and the bone structure of his face has an angular vigour that is rarely to be found in an equal degree.

Mr. Conrad expressed a desire to see some of my work, and came to my room one morning for that purpose, accompanied by the writer Richard Curle. After looking at a number of my portraits in dry-point with

eager excitement and generous praise, we sat for a while and talked. As usual, his utterances galloped along with the greatest vivacity and animation, with expenditure of much energy in voice, gestures, and facial expression. Everything that he said was beautifully adorned by this active manner of expressing it. Such qualities brought to market make an Yvette Guilbert.

Shortly after his return to his home I received a letter asking me to come down to Bishopsbourne and spend a Sunday with him. I was met in Canterbury by his son, and after driving about for a hasty glimpse of this wonderful old town we proceeded some six miles to Mr. Conrad's house. He was at the door to meet me, and his enthusiastic cordiality at once gave me a pleasant sense of being welcome. Linking his arm in mine, he said, "There is just time for a stroll over the place before luncheon. I want you to see my trees and flowers."

The house is of generous size, with a hall dividing it in twain; it is of stone, with a roof of tile, and has several large bow windows. It stands in a plot of ground of two or three acres, and is shielded from the road by a large hedge. Several separate flower gardens of varying shapes and sizes succeeded one another, all of them made beautiful by a skilful use of miniature boxwood hedge, carefully clipped and arranged in formal patterns, confining beds of gorgeous bloom. There was a long bowling green, with immense banks of flowers backed by hedges on either side, and the fruit and vegetable gardens, in their own enclosures, were not the least interesting. Pear and cherry trees trained flat, like vines, against stone walls, were an unusual sight to my American eyes. A huge net covered the cherries to protect them from the birds, but one marauder had found his way past the barrier and Mr. Conrad scolded him as he tried unsuccessfully to assist him to liberty. Several trees of great age and size he showed me, presenting me to them formally as if they were human beings, and promising

JOSEPH CONRAD.

each time that my meeting with the real aristocrat of the place was yet to come. And it was a pleasure when at last I stood under his venerable healthy arms; the most magnificent copper beech I have ever seen. Mr. Conrad talked to this tree with a thrill in his voice and a glowing face, jealously exacting expressions of praise for his splendid arboreal comrade until my really spontaneous enthusiasm satisfied him.

The repeated sounding of a Chinese gong failed to lure my host to luncheon until the call was reinforced by a special messenger. Our tardy arrival found Mrs. Conrad waiting with the members of the household and M. Aubry, a writer. Mrs. Conrad is an Englishwoman and is possessed of much charm. Humour and kindliness shine from her face, and she contributed many gay and amusing things to the conversation. Her fame as a housewife had often come to my ears before this meeting, and the excellence of our repast was well calculated to uphold her reputation. A dish that I could not refrain from mentioning and praising she had made with her own hands, rising at an early hour that morning to prepare it, this being an established habit.

AS we passed to the drawing-room for our coffee I was shown several portraits that had been made of Mr. Conrad, including an interesting caricature by Max Beerbohm. Our stroll in the garden and the leisurely luncheon caused me to be a bit apprehensive about having sufficient time to make a sketch of my distinguished host, as a dinner engagement in London made necessary my departure on an early train. But after coffee the drawing-room was soon deserted by all the party, excepting my prospective sitter and M. Aubry, who was showing me his recently-published book on the art of Boudin. He was carried away promptly, however, to fill a table of bridge, and Mr. Conrad leaned forward with a mischievous wink and smile. "I organized the bridge game," he said; "now we can work without interruption, and besides, I have wanted a chance for a good talk with you."

I selected the light and pose, and my subject immediately congealed into a motionless image, hardly daring to wink or breathe Such a picture of Stoic misery made me laugh, and he inquired if he had moved. "Not an eyelash," I said, "but please do, and smoke and talk as much as you like." His surprise and relief seemed equally great, as he explained that some of his former delineators had been most exacting.

Since he had seen me in London, he said, he had suffered from illness, which had been his lot periodically for quite a while. "I am sure you are overworking," I said. "What you need is rest. You are nervous. Take things more easily."

"No, no, it is not that. Hard work never did harm to anyone. It's something else, I think. Have you noticed my cough?"

I had; at times it was quite violent. "You don't fear that your lungs are affected, do you?" I asked.

"No, no, I'm past the age for tuberculosis, and then I have been examined. My lungs are healthy."

"Then I see nothing to fear from the cough," I said, "and I think I know the reason for it; too many cigarettes. Stop or diminish your smoking and I'm sure the cough will leave you."

"No. I'm sure you are wrong. Why, I did quit for *two whole days*, and I coughed just the same. There was not the slightest difference. And I could not work; I could not sit still. I was unable even to think properly. Constantly I paced up and down, my hand always going to my pocket and appearing with a cigarette and matches which I would put back again. And there was no improvement. I coughed just the same, so after two days I gave it up, and I could work again."

In vain I pointed out to him that a smoker's cough is not acquired in two days nor is it to be eliminated in so short a time. "How many cigarettes do you smoke in a day?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't count them! When one is finished I light another!"

"And do you inhale the smoke?"

He leaned forward and grasped my arm, his eyes round with amazement, and in a voice of protest said: "My dear friend, I don't *play* at smoking. I'm a serious man! What I do I do *thoroughly*, or, at least, as well as I can. Is there anyone who smokes without inhaling?"

I assured him I knew of such people by rumour only and not by experience, and abandoned my catechizing in favour of laughter.

I asked if his new novel had its setting in the South Seas. "No; nearly everyone thinks of me as a writer of the South Seas, but, do you know, I have never even been there. The novels that cause this impression were written of the Malay Archipelago. The story 'Youth' was an actual experience and happened in that locality. The decks of our ship were blown up by an accumulation of coal-gas, and the fire smouldered for days before we made the port. It was a most unearthly thing to see the deck deliberately rise in the air to the accompaniment of a dull roar. One of the sailors was so frightened by it that he jumped overboard."

Mark Twain is one of Mr. Conrad's greatest idols. He spoke of him as a very great man possessed of a universal quality of mind. "All nationalities read him eagerly. His works have been translated into nearly every language; kings and emperors were his intimate friends, as well as people from the lowest walks of life. I suppose I have additional sympathy for him because he started life as a labourer, and was later a steamboat pilot, while I began as an ordinary sailor. I was eighteen years old before I heard the English language spoken. During a long illness I tried for the first time to write. My efforts were praised by some literary men who took an interest in me. I loved to write. I was fascinated at being able to do it. So I tried again with great enthusiasm, and when my first book was published it had good notices from the best of the critics. But though my novels continued to have artistic success, a great many years passed before I made much money. And one needs money with a family to raise and doctor's bills to be paid."

Mr. Conrad was greatly interested as the sketch progressed. I was working against time, and but little remained before the departure of my train. He asked that tea should be prepared while I was giving the last touches to it. As we sat with our tea-cups, he produced a large silver humidor, in which were divisions containing different kinds of cigarettes. "What is your whim to-day? Will you have a cigarette from America, or one from Mexico, or Africa, or Asia, or Europe? They are all here. This is my international cigarette box."

"Do you like the box?" Mrs. Conrad asked.

I replied in the affirmative.

"You can never guess what those coloured bits of glass in the top are. They are fragments from the windows of Rheims Cathedral."

"Ah, this is a scandal," I said. "The French Government is doubtless searching for them now. They are endeavouring to piece those windows together again, you know."

"Then they will have to duplicate these, I fear," she laughed. "I asked if you liked the box, because my unappreciative husband doesn't, or did not. What would you do with a man like this one? I had the box made with the bits of glass carefully inlaid and placed it upon his desk in his study as a birthday surprise. For days it remained unnoticed. He even took cigarettes from it without being aware that it existed. Finally, one day it dawned upon him that an unaccustomed object was encumbering his working space, and he asked, 'What is this thing doing on my desk?' That is the way he appreciates my gifts!" and they laughed heartily.

It is pleasant to see this great novelist and his wife together. The pleasure of each in the company of the other is evident. Twice I heard him attempt to tease her by making some mischievous remark about the queerness of "these English" and their ways, the only response being a happy smile. She showed me a book of photographs of various members of her family and his, the object being that I should see the pictures of him as a child. And a wonderful little chap he was in his quaint Polish habiliments, slender and sensitive, with eager dreaming eyes. In the smooth little face one could easily see the resemblance to the mature head of our brilliant host, though the smoothness was replaced by vigorous planes and furrows, and the whole effect anglicized by monocle and tweeds.

DURING another Sunday visit to Bishopsbourne, when a number of other guests were present, there was considerable discussion of Mr. Conrad's play, "The Secret Agent," that had been recently produced in London. It was a dramatization of one of his novels, and, as is frequent with them, the critics thought themselves safe in attacking a departure by an artist from his established field. The author showed us enthusiastic letters of praise from Arnold Bennett, Hilaire Belloc, and many other prominent people. I said to him that if he wanted a long run for his product, and success at the box-office, he must write a bad play. "That is the trouble," he replied. "I cannot sit down and say 'Now I will write a play'; a play or novel must germinate in my mind and demand to be written. I cannot force it. And I cannot knowingly make concessions to the popular taste. If I wrote a bad play it would not be because I willed it, but in spite of the fact that I was trying to do my best."

I had not seen the performance, and Mr. Conrad regretted not having a copy of his privately printed edition left to give me. Mrs. Conrad lent me hers. On the fly-leaf was written in her husband's distinctive hand, "Dear Jessie's copy."

Mr. Conrad places a high estimate on the work of Arnold Bennett. "I knew him as a boy, just beginning to write. He was modest, almost shy, but with tremendous confidence in himself. He came to me with his early efforts, and I remember one day, when Wells was with me, he suddenly forgot his shyness, and, striding up and down the room, told us what he expected to do. 'In ten years,' he said, 'I shall be one of

the most popular writers in England.' We exchanged a smile at this, but hanged if he did not go and do it!"

For Chesterton, too, he has the greatest admiration. I remarked that in some of his earlier writings his insistence on a rather mechanical form of topsy-turvy paradox had almost maddened me. "True," he said, "after about ninety pages of somersaults I have sometimes been a bit fed-up, but if you will notice, when he turns one of these flip-flops almost invariably he lands on both feet, and astonishingly near the truth. He will stand as one of the biggest literary figures of his time."

As they put me into the car at my departure my warm-hearted host and hostess insisted that I should come for a week-end before I left for America. This proved to be impossible, but as I was leaving my club for Southampton on the twenty-third of December three letters were handed me. They were from Mr. Conrad, his wife, and his niece, each wishing me *bon voyage!* and a Merry Christmas. And I can say to the many admirers of this much-beloved novelist, go on loving him, for the instinct that senses his priceless personal qualities through the medium of his writings has not led you astray.

LORD BEATTY.

EARLY in the war I was much intrigued by the published photographs of Admiral Beatty. Here was a man with dash and spirit stamped upon his bold and handsome visage; with a look of the sea about him, and a devil-may-care nonchalance that cannot be achieved merely by wearing one's cap at an angle. True, the cap was never straight, and would have been utterly "out of the picture" if it had been. It was an harmonious detail in a most romantic and forceful ensemble, and Nature had evidently planned it so, for I have heard that Lord Beatty's hat will not fit in any other way because of the formation of his head. This seemed verified at my first glimpse of him. On one side of his head was a noticeable irregularity that would coincide with the band of a hat worn in the normal position.

The occasion of this first view was a dinner given in Washington by the then Premier of France, M. Briand. Lord Beatty was in mufti. I was fascinated by his vigorous animation as he conversed with his neighbours at table. When I next saw him nothing short of the word "gorgeous" could fittingly describe him. In the full-dress uniform of an Admiral of the British Fleet he had come to the White House to pay his respects to the President on the eve of his departure for England. I could not imagine a man more satisfactory, visually, in measuring up to the high position that he holds, or to the distinguished achievements that are his. I had the pleasure of meeting him at this time, and exchanged a few words with him.

The accompanying dry-point portrait was made some months later in London for inclusion in my memorial portfolio of portraits of the leaders in the Washington Conference. The sittings occurred in the First Sea Lord's office at the Admiralty. As I chose the light and position, my distinguished sitter warned me that what might seem an easy task at first glance would not necessarily prove to be so. Many artists of distinction had painted portraits of him, approaching the task with confidence, but never was a really successful likeness achieved. Even this warning did not at all convince me that there could be much difficulty in drawing a face of such regularity, but at the end of the fourth sitting I had changed my mind. Those apparently regular features had a subtle variance and elasticity that could quickly become a draughtsman's despair. The high-bridged nose had a perspective that changed extraordinarily with the slightest movement of the head, altering the appearance of the entire face. The eyes and mouth had a development suggesting that which one sees frequently in actors of tragedy. With every change of expression the entire structure seemed to alter.

The first expression that confronted me in the initial sitting must have been a fair counterpart of the one Lord Beatty wore at Jutland. He looked at my sketch when it was a bit advanced and said in whimsical terms that its severity suggested a devotee of cannibalism.

"Your fighting mood has come to your assistance in an irksome task," I said, "and your fighting face with it. If you can manage a smile under the circumstances I'll see what can be done to make the picture less ferocious."

The smile came promptly, a broad one, but as promptly disappeared. Whenever he smiled the result was the same. There seemed to be no middle ground. I was able,

LORD BEATTY.

however, to qualify the first severe expression sufficiently. A portrait of Lord Beatty with no hint of his combative genius would be woefully incomplete.

His conversation on these occasions was always pleasant and at times quite jovial. He talked of America, where he had spent a considerable time, of artists of his acquaintance and his experiences with them, also of sports, for which he has an evident passion. Of polo, golf, and tennis he is a skilful exponent.

Once again did I catch a glimpse of his fighting face, on an occasion when a conspiracy of untoward circumstances caused me to be late for a sitting. In spite of the fact that his motor was there to take him away, he waited for me. "Where have you been all this time?" he demanded, as I entered the room. "We have been hunting all over the place for you for half an hour."

My explanation of the difficulties that had kept me he accepted, and his face relaxed from its momentary annoyance when the work began. The first impression from the completed copper plate seemed to interest him greatly. He looked at it for quite a while, smiling from time to time, and giving it most generous approval. Later he autographed some of the prints for me—"Beatty, A. of F."

W. J. LOCKE.

INTO the foyer of a London club walked with swinging stride a very tall man, alert, keen, built like a greyhound. The resemblance to that aristocratic animal did not stop with the figure; the attenuation was equally noticeable in the lean head and slender hands. His pink skin was remarkable for a network of fine lines which combined with his features in a multitude of interesting irregularities. As he approached me his face was suffused with a gleaming and youthful smile, toward the full consummation of which every line was necessary. The twinkling eyes and flashing teeth provided the last delightful touch for the ingratiating ensemble. Here was a Gothic sculpture of the best period. When later I tried to describe to Mr. W. J. Locke the Toledo-blade type of person he appears to be, his laughing reply was, "I assure you that I am the mildest of men."

As we ascended in the lift to my room, my place of abode brought forth some reminiscences from him. He had been a member, and had even lived there for a time some years before. The place was quite familiar to him both above and below stairs. He even remembered a number of the servants, who, he said, were rarely changed. Some had been there for as long as forty years. He enthused over the broad view afforded from my windows, with the Thames and its bridges, St. Paul's, the Tower, the Crystal Palace, and other landmarks visible in the distance. He told me about the club's beginnings, its architect, and various points in which he had succeeded and failed, the club's service in the war, and gave an account of some of the famous figures that had been associated with it.

As I prepared the materials for the making of my sketch, Mr. Locke looked through a portfolio of my portraits, recognizing a number of his friends among the subjects. He greeted the likenesses of W. W. Jacobs and Algernon Blackwood with apparent pleasure, and paused over a drawing of Sir Hall Caine with expressions of real affection.

"Hall Caine is a most sincere and kindly person. I really love him. He is a man of rare personal qualities. I first came to know him well during a stay in Egypt some years ago. He has the ability to win the confidence of children without offending their intelligence by indulgence in 'baby-talk' and similar nonsense. On one occasion he sat for two hours with my little girl, seriously discussing the ancient monuments and history of Egypt. The child was completely absorbed, and Sir Hall was equally content and happy. A man who can achieve that with a twelve-year-old child is no common person. He is accused of being vain—well, he has something to be vain about."

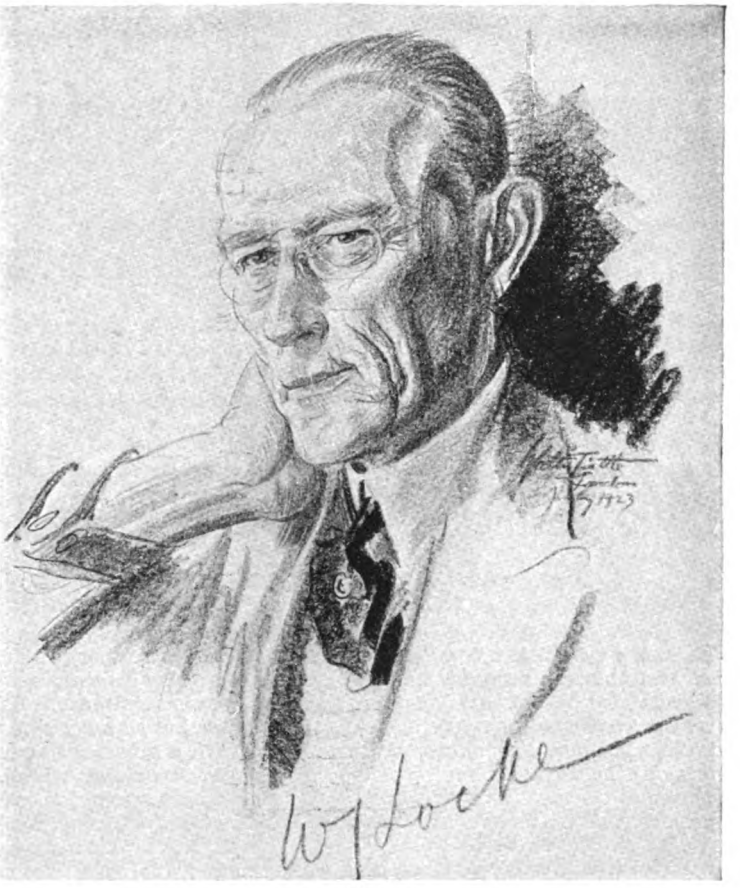
A portrait of the Countess of Cromer again took him back to Egypt.

"I saw her there when Lord Cromer was Governor-General. She was exceedingly beautiful," he said, "and beloved by everyone."

MR. LOCKE in our conversation revealed a considerable knowledge of painters and their art. French art of the nineteenth century is a particular enthusiasm with him. The excellences of Renoir, Degas, and Manet are precious to him, and he spoke, too, of the beauty of hand and mind of the American Whistler. "He was a genius," he said. He mentioned an outstanding contemporary figure in British art who achieves splendid things when at his best, "but even then his colour is nearly always muddy. And a regrettable thing is that all his multitude of students think that their colour must be muddy too! It is the same in the case of so many followers of Cezanne and Renoir. Slavishly their disciples copy the bad drawing without a suspicion of where the beauty in their work really lies."

Mr. Locke has lived at Cannes, in the South of France, for a number of years. "It is a beautiful country, and you should see it when you go to the Continent again. The Riviera is exquisite, and there are marvellous things to see in architecture all through Southern France. The châteaux, the Roman remains, and the buildings erected by the Popes at Avignon are all tremendously worth seeing. And you say you plan to go to Spain? I envy you! I have explored it thoroughly, but would love to do it again and again. If you can be there in the vintage season Spain will present to you a series of the most joyous and colourful pictures.

"Of course the pictures in the museums will appeal to you, but you must not miss rural Spain! And the bull-fights, held sometimes in ancient Roman amphitheatres, make antiquity real again. To see the brilliant colours and activity in those vast structures takes one back to ancient Rome. I would advise you to find an agreeable companion and together buy a little car. You can get one for very little, use it to



W. J. LOCKE.

tour Spain, and sell it when you have finished. The expense will not be great, and there is no other way to get acquainted with the country so well."

Mr. Locke has spent some time in America. He told me of various literary and artistic friends there, some of whom I knew, and of a pleasant experience he had as guest of a well-known club of artists and writers similar to the Savage Club of London. Naturally the conversation drifted to Prohibition and its many complications, a subject which is of unfailing interest to people of several nationalities who are not at all sure that they may not be the next to suffer—or benefit, as you please—from a similar law. I had quite a shock when I mentioned that great American contribution to civilization, the cocktail. The responsibility, or credit, for this seductive concoction Mr. Locke challenged, informing me that the cocktail is a West Indian invention. I was loath to give up the honour without a struggle, but the facts seemed to be on his side. As a boy he lived near the original Angostura Bitters manufactory, and he remembers seeing his father mixing the primitive ancestor of the present extensive family of this popular *apéritif*, the chief ingredient being the famous bitters. The result was achieved without ice or "shaker," the concoction being *frappé* by an instrument spun between the hands called a "swizzle-stick." This method is still used in Barbados. The only comfort for my national pride to which I could cling was that the principal subsequent development of this beverage of infinite variety was later achieved in America.

My sketch being finished we descended to the smoking-room, and here, under Mr. Locke's careful direction, cocktails were prepared that were quite effectual in healing my wound.

"When you come to the South of France be sure to stop at Cannes," he said. "We have our regular cocktail hour daily, and I'll display to you my prowess. I am known there as the champion mixer of Southern France!"

NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

by

W. L. GEORGE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

PROFESSOR JONES felt comfortable and at rest that morning, for he had no lecture to deliver at Vespucci University, where he generally entertained the youth of the nation with considerations on the revolution of planes and the bisecting of cones. In other words, he was a professor of mathematics. That morning, as he looked out of his window towards the slaty sky, he reflected that his apartment had all the advantages a man of science requires—namely, aloofness from the over-rich, distance from noisy streets, and a southern aspect. About him the study was lined with books, devoid of decoration, and would have seemed rather inhuman if the Professor's unspeakable old umbrella, rolled like a badly-made sausage, were not resting in a corner, waiting for him to go out.

The Professor, however, was not going out that morning; he was enjoying a holiday, and making use of it over a pretty little problem in the integral calculus, connected with the thermic radiation of smoke. Just as an omnibus driver on holiday rides on an omnibus, so did this professor of mathematics devote his leisure to mathematics. He had just arrived at the exciting situation when $\frac{XV - YF^2}{17645 \times P^3} = A - N^3$ when the telephone rang. He looked up malevolently at the instrument, telling himself that it ought to be muzzled, and seriously considered ignoring it, hoping that it would stop. Meanwhile, he continued to ponder. But unfortunately the telephone was that morning handled by a young girl of some energy. The young lady set her teeth and determined to wake up the Professor even if he were dead. For over a minute the Professor stood this torture, hurled a book at the bell, missed it, and with a groan surrendered.

"Coulter speaking. Is that Professor Jones?" said an agitated masculine voice.

"Yes. Good morning, Mr. Coulter."

"Professor, I want to ask you to do something for me, something very important and urgent."

"Yes," said the Professor. "I'll be pleased, but what is it?"

"Well," said Coulter, "if you don't mind—you know, it's hardly a thing I like to talk about over the telephone. Only, you remember the time when you were of such great service to the Countess D'Arques?"

"Yes," said the Professor, smiling, as he remembered that by mathematics he had deduced the spotlessness of the said lady's reputation.

"Well," said Coulter, "it's not the same sort of case, of course. I'm a moral man, Professor. But I'm in great trouble, great business trouble, and if you're not too busy you'd be doing me a great service if you'd come across to my office now."

The Professor thought for a moment. It was hard to tear himself away from $\frac{XV - YF^2}{17645 \times P^3} = A - N^3$. But he had a pretty taste in detective work! "All right, Mr. Coulter," he said. "Of course, you know my terms: if I am of service to you, you will make the usual donation to the Benevolent Fund of our Poor Students' Association."

Copyright, 1924, by W. L. George.

"All right, all right," said Coulter, agitatedly. "If you bring this off your old boys shall have a thousand pounds."

Professor Jones was interested. He did not know Coulter very well, having met him only two or three times, but he knew him as a powerful financier. He concluded that the interview he was just going to have would deal with a matter in no wise trifling. When at last he reached the office of the Coulter Corporation, he observed that there were no signs of disarray in the office itself, and concluded that a highly private matter was to be laid before him. He was surprised, however, to notice the agitation of Coulter. It was not perceptible in the man's manner, for he was too highly trained by business to give himself away, but the Professor observed that he had made his parting in an unusual place on his head, and that he must have picked up a pen hurriedly by the point, since a longitudinal smear, half an inch long and a little over an eighth of an inch broad, was to be seen on the inner side of his right thumb.

"Look here, Professor," said Coulter. "I'm in serious trouble. And I desperately want you to help me, not because the trouble can be righted—what's done is done—but because it mustn't happen again. Last night or this morning, I can't tell you exactly when, a business secret of the utmost importance fell into the wrong hands. It's a matter which perhaps you wouldn't be interested in, but still you'll realize that a corporation like ours has information which must not be made public until we think right."

"Quite so, quite so," said the Professor. "Tell me: what was the information?"

"I don't think I can——" began Coulter, then made a languid gesture and added: "After all, it's public now, it's been made public, and I may as well tell you." The Professor watched with interest the square, rather fat face, the glossy hair, the hard jaw and hard eyes, telling himself that here was a dangerous man to tackle. "Look here," said Coulter; "you've heard of the Three Trees Mine, haven't you?"

"Yes," said the Professor. "It's in Colorado, isn't it? A very famous old mine, which produces a great deal of gold."

"It doesn't," said Coulter, dramatically. "The lode has suddenly pinched out at depth. The mine's worthless. The stock, which a week ago stood at a hundred and eight, is this morning standing at nineteen. Now, Professor, you begin to see what's happened. I have an interest in the Three Trees Mine, a small interest, it's true, and I thought I knew everything about that mine that could be known. Of course, I

"Look here, Professor," said Coulter. "I'm in serious trouble. And I desperately want you to help me."

have my own methods for gaining information, but I need not trouble you with them. It is enough to tell you that I was the first to receive this information. I was the first to know that the mine is finished. I heard of it through a telegram which reached me last night at about half-past six. I telephoned my two partners, but neither was at home. Still, I had to give them the information because—well, these are business matters. They, too, have an interest in the corporation—anyhow, I had to consult them. I was in a difficulty, for I was going out to dinner with my wife, and it was vital that I should be present, because I was meeting a man with whom I hoped to do business immediately after dinner, when "—Coulter smiled—" when he had had a little champagne. So I did perhaps a foolish thing. I wrote each of my partners a letter, giving them the information. I dropped the letters myself from my car. The arrangement was that we should all meet here at ten o'clock and decide what to do."

"What did you intend to do?" asked the Professor.

Coulter smiled. "You men of science are really rather unpractical. We intended to sell as much stock as we could find buyers for at any price we could get, and then, of course, to publish the information so that the bottom might fall out of the market; then we should buy back our stock, making a big profit. But that's not what happened at all; it's now eleven o'clock; a few minutes after the Stock Exchange opened the market was flooded with selling orders. The stock, which had opened at a hundred and nine, was down to seventy-eight by the time we three met. By the time we had talked the matter over it was down to fifty-seven. Of course, we sold all we could, too, and we haven't done so badly, for we've averaged our sales at thirty, and we can buy back to-day at much less. But, Professor, that's not what's bothering me; we've missed a big stroke of business, and that's all in the course of the day's work, for one can't help going wrong now and then. What's troubling me is: who let out the information? There's a traitor somewhere round me, and I haven't the faintest idea who it is. What I want is for you to find this man."

THE PROFESSOR did not reply for some time. Here was the sort of case he always enjoyed, a case which did not concern the police, and evidently one which would give exercise to his faculties. "Very curious indeed," he remarked, half to himself. "That is, of course, if I've got the details right. May I go over them with you? Your information came from an agent you trust, I suppose? There's no chance of his having told anybody else?"

"No," said Coulter, smiling. "Since you don't know who it is, Professor, I don't mind telling you that it's worth his while to hold his tongue. If he were to play me false I have upon him a hold that could put him in jail. It's always better to employ a crook than an honest man, for an honest man may become a crook, while a crook is afraid of his own past."

"Very good," said Professor Jones. "We will assume that your agent is honest, though there is no reason for assuming it. You alone had the information?"

"No. I told my wife."

"How very wise of you!" said the Professor. "It is generally thought that women cannot keep secrets, but I find that they always do when it's to their advantage."

"I'm glad you don't suspect my wife," said Coulter. "She's been my best friend for twenty years, and she's shrewd, Professor. I tell her everything, because she always gives me good advice, especially when something is not quite on the level."

"Now," said the Professor, unmoved by this frank confession. "You put away this telegram? In your safe? Good. You then telephoned your partners, found that they were out, and wrote two letters. Who delivered the letters?"

"I took them in the car. The chauffeur handed them in at each house."

"How long was the man away?"

"Oh, thirty seconds in each case. I saw him hand the letters to the servants."

"What time was it?" asked the Professor.

"About twenty past seven."

"What time did these gentlemen get the letters?"

"Oh, if you're thinking that they were tampered with on the way," said Coulter, smiling, "you're on the wrong track. My partners were both dressing for dinner as the letters arrived; they were taken up straight to them. Moreover, I'm not so careless as you think. I sealed both letters with my own hands, with a seal bearing my crest."

"Therefore the letters arrived with unbroken seals into the hands of your partners, two or three minutes after you delivered them?"

"Yes."

"Therefore they were not tampered with on the way. I presume, of course, that the recipients opened the letters themselves. Do you know what they did with them?"

"I'm afraid that my partners are more prudent than I am," said Coulter, sadly. "One of them put my letter in his private safe, while the other burnt it."

"Thank you," said the Professor. "I see the situation. Many things are possible.

The telegram may have been tampered with before it reached you. You may talk in your sleep. The safe may have been opened. Your partners may be indiscreet. They may be disloyal to you——"

"Come, Professor," said Coulter, encouragingly, "don't run after moonbeams." He told himself that the mathematician was perhaps much overrated. In fact, he did not know that Professor Jones always talked wildly, so as to get his victim into a casual state, when he would talk carelessly and afford abundant information.

"I'm not talking wildly," said the Professor. "Everything is possible, and it is the unlikely that happens. I'm afraid I can do nothing for you here, since this office has nothing to do with the case. Would you have any objection to my examining the room where you received the telegram?"

"Certainly not," said Coulter. "I'll go with you." As the car worked its way through the traffic, Coulter confided the details over again; he was frenzied by the idea that at his side some traitor watched, who might at any moment foil his best-conceived financial schemes. The Professor said little, listening much.

COULTER'S study was a large room, furnished in the usual millionaire style, with Italian furniture, paintings, and a powerful roll-top desk. Against the wall stood a long table where now worked a young man whom Coulter briefly introduced and then sent out.

"Who is this young man?" asked Professor Jones.

"Oh, he's a sort of all-round private secretary. He doesn't look after my business affairs, but he's responsible for my social correspondence, my wife's letters, charity, household accounts, etc., all that sort of thing."

The Professor made no remark and proceeded to examine the whole of the room, the desk, the pen that Coulter had used, even the carpet, with a minuteness that infuriated the millionaire. The Professor even tapped the telephone and looked into the receiver with an air of suspicion. Coulter followed him about aimlessly, feeling superior and at the same time childish; the Professor was behaving like an industrious mouse. When he turned to the secretary's table and proceeded to go over every paper, to smell the writing pad, and to search the store of stationery, Coulter exploded.

"Look here, Professor, I don't know what you think you're going to get out of all this. I tell you I wrote the thing myself; carried it myself; saw it delivered myself. You won't find any information here. I say that it's the telegraph people. I felt sure of it all the time."

"If you are so sure," said Professor Jones, "why call me in? Remember, I'm not doing this for pleasure. If it weren't that some of our students come upon bad times and need help, I should tell you to find the telegraph people, since you're so sure."

"I beg your pardon, Professor," said the millionaire, "but you can't imagine what a state of nerves I'm in."

"I can see that," said the Professor. "So you'll be pleased to hear that I'm much interested in your case and am on the way to making a discovery."

"What!" shouted Coulter. "Got him?"

"Not yet," said the Professor. "Now, I'll ask you to leave me in this room for a few moments. I've an experiment to make."

"Go ahead with the experiment."

"No; I must be alone. Your presence would defeat it."

Coulter looked doubtfully at the roll-top desk, evidently considering whether the Professor proposed to search it and get a little information for himself; then, ashamed of his suspicion, he growled and went out, slamming the door.

A few moments later the Professor's emaciated head appeared through the doorway. "Come in, Mr. Coulter, now," he said. "Sit down at your desk, won't you? I've got to talk to you."

"Have you got the spy?" said Coulter, ungraciously, sitting down at his desk and toying with one of the pencils which were lying before him.

"Not quite," replied Professor Jones. "Yours is a most interesting case, Mr. Coulter. It seems to me that the crime, as I suppose we may call it, is one of extreme subtlety. The subtlety of men in pursuit of money is altogether amazing. For instance, I recall a case of criminal subtlety which, no doubt, you will consider absurd, but which I assure you is not without a parallel in the annals of crime. Some years ago, at a certain diamond mine in South Africa, a number of diamonds were being stolen in the course of work by the negroes who extracted the blue clay where the diamonds are found. The men were searched as they came off the mine; following on the thefts, these precautions were intensified to an almost incredible degree. Before leaving the premises of the mine, every one of the men was compelled to go into the change-house, remove every scrap of clothing, and pass before an inspector, while another inspector searched their clothes, including even the linings. Yet, a week later, a diamond dealer on close terms with the mine

produced seventeen stones of good quality which had been offered to him, and which evidently came from the mine. You will, I suppose, think out some amazing device practised by the negro; you will jump to the conclusion that he hid the stones in his mouth, but that is not so, for even mouths were examined. No, the diamonds were not fired from a rifle over the wall; they were not picked up by aeroplane. All that happened was this: the negro made up the stones into a little parcel, put them into an envelope, stamped them with an ordinary stamp, and posted them to his father in the ordinary letter-box of the mine. Thus the stolen stones were handled by the mine postman, and delivered with the compliments of the mine. This, Mr. Coulter, contains a precious indication of the course we must follow. Now, don't tap with that pencil in that irritated way. I am only trying to assist you."

"All right, go on," said Coulter, mastering his nerves and staring vaguely at the blotter which lay under his pencil.

"Let me explain to you, Mr. Coulter," the Professor went on, "that the mechanism of the human mind is what you might call double-barrelled. One of the portions governs what we may call subterfuge, and out of that portion come the devices practised by forgers, political spies, and, if you will allow me to say so, certain financial magnates. The other portion consists in the human innocence; it leads men to take what they want openly, thinking that they will escape scot-free. That portion governs the emotions of the ordinary burglar. Now in the present case we have to take in the reaction of the innocence upon the subterfuge; we have to realize how these two may combine, and how the obvious course indicated by innocence may be selected by subterfuge, because subterfuge is sufficiently acute to realize that it will be suspected, and therefore that the most subtle course is to take the road of innocence." The Professor went on for some time, developing the psychological argument, every moment growing more and more dull. About ten minutes elapsed, and still he was explaining, when he interrupted himself to say, in suave tones: "You're not listening to me, Mr. Coulter, but that doesn't matter. We have travelled a long way towards the detection of your traitor."

"What do you mean?" cried Mr. Coulter. "What has your lecture on psychology got to do with it?"

"That," said the Professor, "I advise you to leave to me for the moment. Once again, Mr. Coulter, would you leave the room? I will follow you in one moment, and I think I can promise you that if you now do what I tell you, you will catch the traitor this afternoon."

COULTER got up grumpily, shrugged his shoulders, murmured something about "monkey tricks" and "popping in and out of the room." Still, he went out, closing the door, and about a minute later was followed by the Professor, who seemed satisfied.

"Mr. Coulter," said the Professor, "I know you think I'm very foolish——"

"I don't say that," said Coulter. "Only, you see——"

"Only it's all very queer, isn't it?" said the Professor. "All this coming in and going out makes you think I'm a doddering old fool, doesn't it? But I'm sure you have your own queer ways in your own business. Let me be queer in mine, and do what I tell you."

"Yes," said Coulter. "What is it?"

"How many people do you employ at your office?"

"Oh, we don't need much staff; we three do most of the work ourselves. We've only got seventeen on our pay roll, but surely you don't suspect them?"

"I suspect everybody," said Professor Jones. "Even you, Mr. Coulter. I can even suspect you of making up this story to deceive your partners. There, don't get angry; it's my business to suspect people. You say there are seventeen people on your pay roll? Does this include your household?"

"No; we have five servants, our private secretary, a chauffeur, and," he laughed ironically, 'I believe a girl is paid to come and clean the steps every morning."

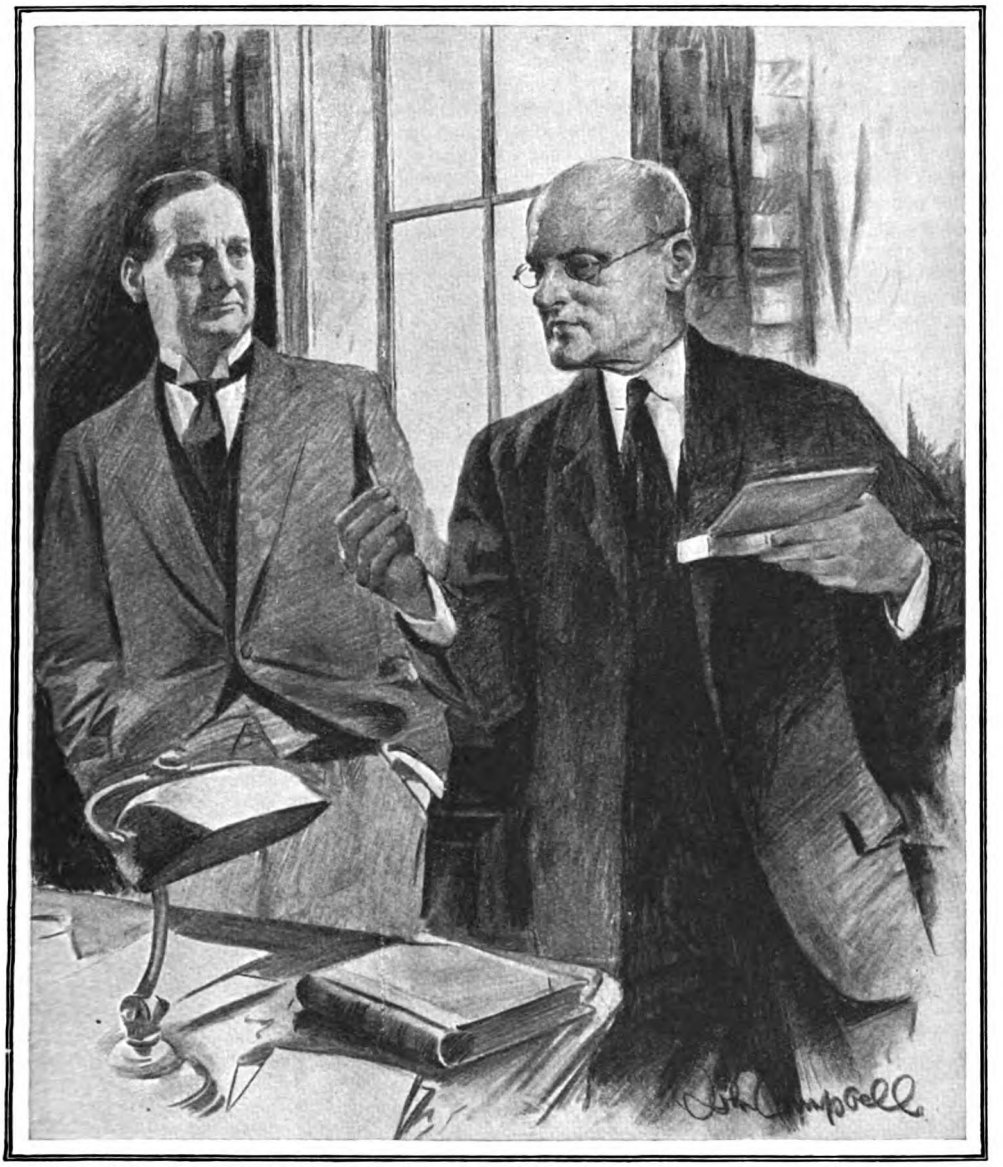
"Very well," said Professor Jones. "Will you please call every person on your pay roll, every person connected with your office or your house, including your wife, your son, and yourself, to appear at your office this afternoon? Is there a large room or a hall in your building?"

"Yes, there's a room we use for meetings of shareholders. It's filled with long tables. You know the sort of room."

"Good," said Professor Jones. "You will call this meeting for three o'clock, and before twenty-past three the traitor will be in your hands."

At three o'clock exactly, in the small hall of the Justice Building, a strange assemblage collected in a state of suppressed excitement, for every one of the thirty-one people who were present knew that something was wrong. Only five, the Professor, Coulter, his wife, and his two partners, knew that this meeting was connected with the Three Trees scandal. As they filed in, these searched with suspicion the faces of their companions.

Owing to this mood of suspicion, they concluded that every person present might very well be a spy. Since everybody was



The Professor proceeded to examine the whole of the room with a minuteness that infuriated the millionaire.

puzzled and self-conscious, it was natural that the stenographers should be in a state varying between the giggle and the tear; that the butler should look ducal and reserved. The mood of the various clerks and departmental heads was one of nervous optimism, for they were not sure whether Coulter proposed to announce the formation of a benefit fund or a general cut in salaries. As for Mrs. Coulter, who was still young and pretty, and wore a great many diamonds, she was in a state of contained fury at being compelled to attend a meeting by the side of her own maid. There was a lot of rustling and suppressed chatter as the people settled down at the tables before the new pens, pencils, and blotters which lay before each one. They felt dramatic and puzzled, and silence fell only when Coulter stood up to announce that Professor Jones had to say a few words. Then he flung himself back in his arm-chair, wondering what his staff would think of him if nothing came of this tomfoolery.

The Professor stood up, seized the lapels of his coat, cleared his throat, and began in a thin, piping voice: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to have disturbed you from your ordinary work and occupations, but I must make you aware of the fact that a serious breach of commercial confidence has taken place. Mr. Coulter, there is no harm in repeating it now, is one of the principal stockholders in the Three Trees Mine." The Professor paused and rapidly swept the assembly with a glance, but every face was staring at him with a lack of expression so successful that he wondered whether they were all in it. The pause having yielded no result, he went on: "A piece of information came by telegraph to Mr. Coulter yesterday, and Mr. Coulter informed his partners, the two gentlemen who sit here, by means of letters which he himself caused to be delivered to the addresses. These letters contained information as to the Three Trees Mine which led Mr. Coulter to the view——"

"Need we enter into that, Professor?" cried Coulter.

"One moment, Mr. Coulter. I haven't quite finished. This information would have led Mr. Coulter to sell stock. It was very private information, and yet it seems that by some means it was communicated to another person, who sold stock, or caused stock to be sold, with the result that Mr. Coulter's market was spoilt.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have called you together to ask your co-operation in discovering the author of this breach of confidence. I have carefully considered every possible eventuality, and I now ask the guilty person to stand up and confess the crime. No proceedings will be taken; indeed, if this misguided person needs help to make a new start, I have Mr. Coulter's promise that he will give a little financial assistance." He paused, but there was no reply. All the eyes stared at him, and the faces were serious. "I feared as much," he went on. "Therefore, I must take you a little further into my confidence. I have come to a conclusion, and I am sorry to say that it indicates feminine action." At these words Mrs. Coulter stiffened, but the Professor did not seem to notice her. As for the stenographers, all three drew up, conveying by the angle of their chins that the meeting concerned them no more. As for the second housemaid, she immediately blushed crimson, so that from that moment all her neighbours kept upon her suspicious eyes. This encouraged her blush, and before many minutes were over she reached mauve.

"Yes," said the Professor, "I am sure that a woman is in the case. For the moment I will not name her, though I have every reason and right to do so. I will ask you rather to follow me in the methods of crime and into the functioning of the criminal mind. The mechanism of the human mind is what you might call double-barrelled. One of the portions governs what we may call subterfuge, and out of that portion come the devices practised by forgers, political spies, and, if you will allow me to say so, certain financial magnates. The other portion consists in the human innocence; it leads men to take what they want openly, thinking that they will escape scot-free. That portion governs the emotions of the ordinary burglar. Now, in the present case we have to take in the reaction of the innocence upon the subterfuge; we have to realize how these two may combine and how the obvious course indicated by innocence may be selected by subterfuge, because subterfuge is sufficiently acute to realize that it will be suspected, and therefore that the most subtle course is to take the road of innocence."

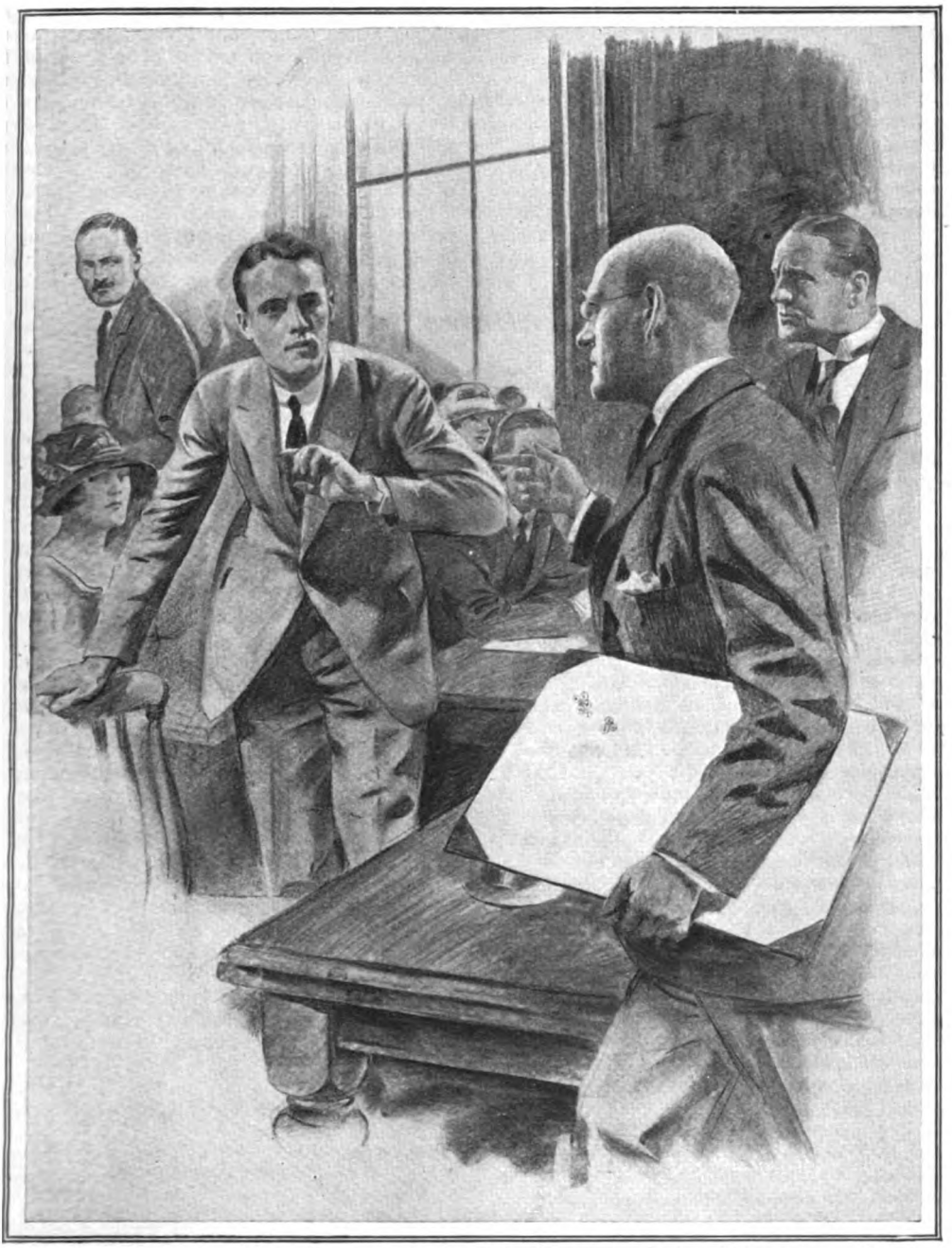
Coulter stared at the Professor in a state of complete stupefaction. He had heard all this before, and wondered whether it amounted to a sort of incantation, such as was used once upon a time by the magicians. But the Professor was entirely unruffled. Indeed, he went on, occasionally referring to criminal women, and developing in the most involved and incomprehensible manner considerations on psychology. By degrees people ceased to stare; their attention wandered, they looked about them; feet could be heard scraping; there was coughing, and sighing, as a heavy boredom fell over the assembly.

JUST as Coulter was going to protest the Professor stopped, stepped down from the rostrum where he had been speaking, walked up to the secretary, and snatched from before him the blotter which marked his place. "Mr. Turvey," he said, in quiet, sad tones, "you are the man who discovered Mr. Coulter's secret and used it. Confess, or I'll have you arrested."

The young secretary jumped up and staggered back against a chair. "I—no, no—it's not true," he faltered, but his averted eyes, his lax features, proclaimed him guilty.

Coulter pushed forward through the gabbling herd, took the young man by the arm, and led him into a small office, where at once two clerks followed to mount guard over him.

"Come into my own office," said Coulter to the Professor. "He's guilty right enough. I can see it in his face, but I've got to know more." Professor Jones did not look emaciated in that office, for his features were rosy



The young secretary jumped up and staggered back against a chair. "I—no, no—it's not true," he faltered.

with satisfaction. Not even the decimal conversion of the surd could have pleased him more.

"Now," said Coulter, when they were alone, "tell me how you did it."

"It's simple enough," said the Professor, with pardonable pride. "While I was examining your room at home I, of course, examined the blotters. Your own blotter was clean, but your secretary's blotter bore the marks of a brief letter. You don't remember that when I was examining your

desk I asked you if a certain letter was in your handwriting."

"Oh, yes, I do remember now," said Coulter. "But what——"

"The marks on your secretary's blotter corresponded with your handwriting. I sent you out of the room, inverted the blotter against the window, and read there the words: 'the Three Trees Mine is done for.' That is all there was, except part of your signature, so I concluded that this was what you wrote in the first instance, that you blotted it——"

"Yes," cried Coulter, "yes, I know! I walked about the room—I used his blotter. Still, that doesn't matter. I don't understand. Of course, my secretary may have read the message, but how do you know he did?"

"Ah!" said the Professor, "that is where the case becomes interesting. Until now it was merely vulgar. Here is the sheet. Look at it. What do you see?"

"I see what you say," replied Coulter. "My handwriting, except that squiggly stuff at the corner."

"That squiggly stuff, Mr. Coulter, as you call it, is an idle drawing. You will observe that it is based on noughts and crosses. The author first made a cross, then put a nought round it. He used that nought as the basis of another, a slightly larger one. In the middle of the second nought he put another cross, and so forth. That is why, Mr. Coulter, I sent you out of the room, to call you back again to lecture you at not too great a length, I hope."

"Why?" cried Coulter. "You may think you're explaining to me, but I'm as puzzled as ever."

"Because," said the Professor, "I wanted to get you into a mood of boredom and inattention. I wanted to see what idle drawing you would make if you became bored and listless. You see, Mr. Coulter, it was quite possible that you should have gone to your secretary's desk, pondered a while, and made that drawing of noughts and crosses, in which case I could not have been sure."

"By Jove!" shouted Coulter. "Now I see it. I remember. My secretary was working late last night; he was writing out invitations. He must have read the message. It's as clear as anything."

"Yes, it's clear to you now," said the Professor, with justifiable sarcasm, "but even so you couldn't have got proof of it unless I had done what I will now explain to you. While you sat at your desk, and when you grew bored, I watched you. After a while, like any other human being, you began to play with your pencil. Then you made the drawing which I now have pleasure in laying before you, and which I took when you left the room for the second time."

Coulter stared at it. Certainly it bore no resemblance to the other. His idle drawing was almost entirely composed of curves, one running into the other, completing the shape of a formal rose. Inside this one he drew another. There was also an attempt to build a second rose on to one of the sides of the completed one.

"You see!" said the Professor. "It wasn't the same drawing. So I said to myself: 'Find the person who makes the drawings of noughts and crosses, and you've found the only person who can have read the message on the blotter.' It could only be Turvey, obviously, but I had to prove it before I took away his character. That is why I called the meeting, Mr. Coulter. That is why I talked and talked, why I was incomprehensible and dull, so that all your minds might wander. That is why I suggested a woman as the culprit, so that the guilty man might have his mind at rest, so that at last, drawn by his habit, he might make an idle drawing. Perhaps you do not know, but we nearly all of us make only one idle drawing, always the same. It varies over a term of years, but from one day to the other we always make more or less the same drawing. Indeed, look! Here you are in your office: what is that upon the telephone-book? Your own idle drawing of the formal rose. You have made it without knowing it—just as at the meeting Turvey made the drawing which he always makes. Here it is."

Coulter stared. Here indeed was a drawing composed of noughts and crosses. The circle was complete, and within stood Turvey.

"Professor!" shouted Coulter. "You're a wonder. I never saw smarter work done in twenty minutes."

The Professor looked away sadly. "No, Mr. Coulter, I was wrong. I took twenty-four minutes and forty-four seconds to get our man bored. After all, perhaps I ought to be glad that I didn't bore him more easily."

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER XV.—*continued.*

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF SPORT.

CRICKET.

MY earliest recollection of cricket is not a particularly pleasant one. When I was a very small boy at a preparatory school, I was one of a group of admirers who stood around watching a young cricketer, who had just made his name, hitting big hits off the school bowlers. One of the big hits landed on my knee-cap, and the cricketer in his own famous arms carried me off to the school infirmary. The name, Tom Emmett, lingers in my memory, though it was some years before I appreciated exactly what he stood for in the game. I think, like most boys, I would rather have been knocked down by a first-class cricketer than picked up by a second-rater.

That was the beginning of my acquaintance with a game which has on the whole given me more pleasure during my life than any other branch of sport. I have ended by being its victim, for a fast bowler some years ago happened to hit me twice in the same over on my left knee, which has left a permanent weakness. I have had as long an innings as one could reasonably expect, and carry many pleasant friendships and recollections away with me.

I was a keen cricketer as a boy, but in my student days was too occupied to touch it. Then I took it up again, but my progress was interrupted by work and travel. I had some cause, therefore, to hold on to the game as I had lost so much of it in my youth. Finally I fulfilled a secret ambition by getting into the fringe of first-class cricket, though rather, perhaps, through the good nature of others than my own merits. However, I can truly say that in the last season in which I played some first-class cricket, including matches against Kent, Derbyshire, and the London County, I had an average of thirty-two for those games, so I may claim to have earned my place. I was more useful, however, in an amateur team, for I was a fairly steady and reliable bowler, and I could generally earn my place in that department, while with the M.C.C. the professional talent is usually so strong that the amateur who fails in batting and is not a particularly good field has no chance of atoning with the ball. Yet even with the M.C.C. I have occasionally had a gleam of success. Such a one came some years ago, when the team presented me with a little silver hat for getting three consecutive clean-bowled wickets against the Gentlemen of Warwick. One of my victims explained his downfall by assuring me that he had it thoroughly in his head that I was a left-handed bowler, and when the ball came from my right hand he was too bewildered to stop it. The reason is not so good as that of an artist who, when I had bowled him out, exclaimed: "Who can play against a man who bowls in a crude pink shirt against an olive-green background?"

Copyright, 1924, by A. Conan Doyle.

A bowler has many days when everything is against him, when a hard, smooth wicket takes all the spin and devil out of him, when he goes all round and over the wicket, when lofted balls refuse to come to hand, or, if they do come, refuse to stay. But, on the other hand, he has his recompense with many a stroke of good fortune. It was in such a moment that I had the good luck to get the wicket of W. G. Grace, the greatest of all cricketers.

W. G. had his speedy revenge. There was nothing more childlike and bland than that slow, tossed-up bowling of his, and nothing more subtle and treacherous. He was always on the wicket or about it, never sent down a really loose ball, worked continually a few inches from the leg, and had a perfect command of length. It was the latter quality which was my downfall. I had made some thirty or forty, and began to relax in the deep respect with which I faced the Doctor's deliveries. I had driven him for four, and jumped out at him again the next ball. Seeing my intention, as a good bowler does, he dropped his ball a foot or two shorter. I reached it with difficulty, but again I scored four. By this time I was very pleased with myself, and could see no reason why every one of these delightful slows should not mean a four to me. Out I danced to reach the next one on the half volley. It was tossed a little higher up in the air, which gave the delusion that it was coming right up to the bat, but as a matter of fact it pitched well short of my reach, broke sharply across, and Lilley, the wicket-keeper, had my bails off in a twinkling. One feels rather cheap when one walks from the middle of the pitch to the pavilion, longing to kick oneself for one's own foolishness all the way. I have only once felt smaller, and that was when I was bowled by A. P. Lucas by the most singular ball that I have ever received. He propelled it like a quoit into the air to a height of at least thirty feet, and it fell straight and true on to the top of the bails. I have often wondered what a good batsman would have made of that ball. To play it one would have needed to turn the blade of the bat straight up, and could hardly fail to give a chance. I tried to cut it off my stumps, with the result that I knocked down my wicket and broke my bat, while the ball fell in the midst of this general chaos. I spent the rest of the day wondering gloomily what I ought to have done—and I am wondering yet.

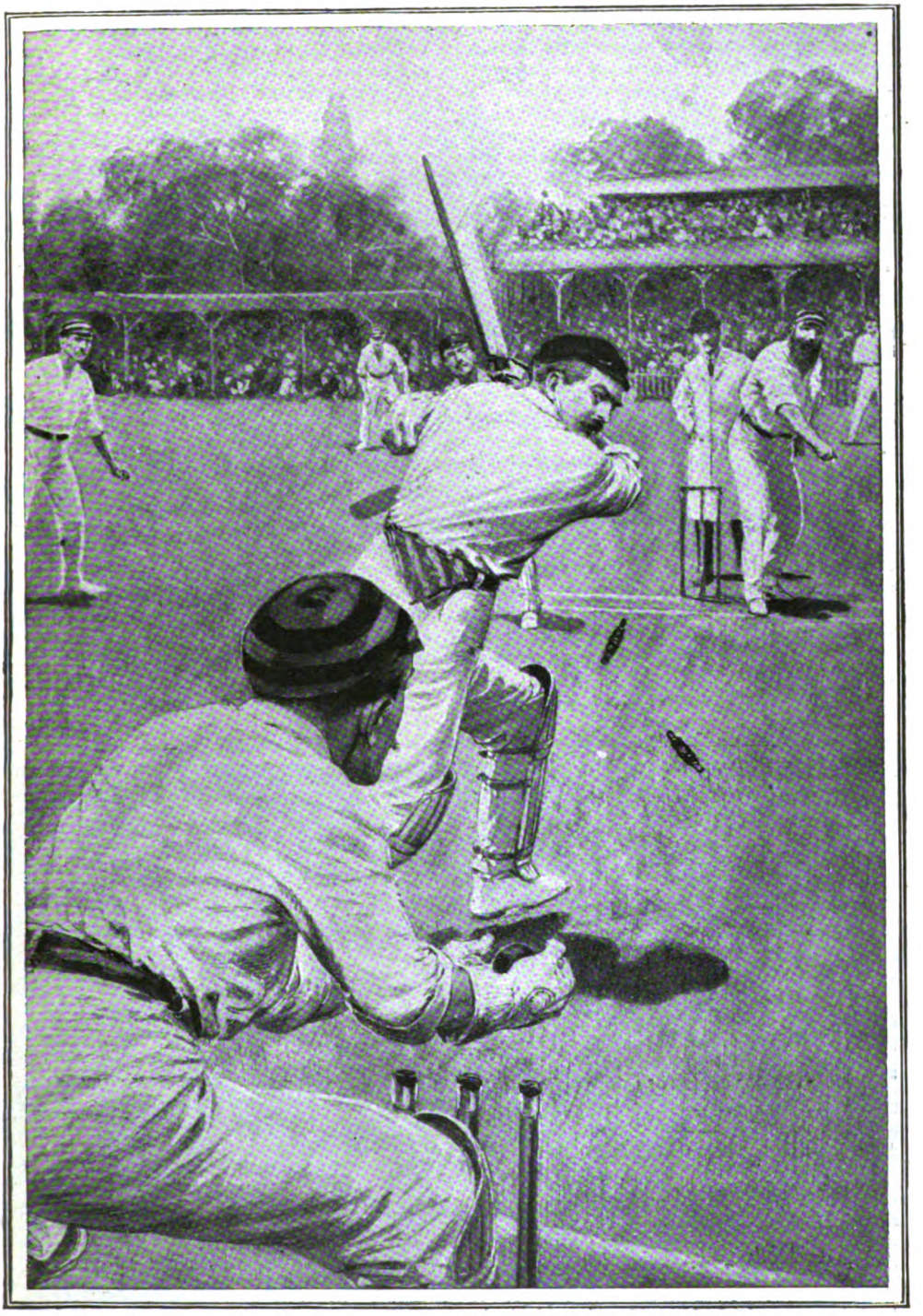
I HAVE had two unusual experiences upon Lord's ground. One was that I got a century in the very first match that I played there. It was an unimportant game, it is true, but still the surprising fact remained. It was a heavy day, and my bat, still encrusted with the classic mud, hangs as a treasured relic in my hall. The other was less pleasant and even more surprising. I was playing for the Club against Kent, and faced for the first time Bradley, who was that year one of the fastest bowlers in England. His first delivery I hardly saw, and it landed with a terrific thud upon my thigh. A little occasional pain is one of the chances of cricket, and one takes it as cheerfully as one can, but on this occasion it suddenly became sharp to an unbearable degree. I clapped my hand to the spot, and found to my amazement that I was on fire. The ball had landed straight on a small tin vesta box in my trouser pocket, had splintered the box and set the matches ablaze. It did not take me long to turn out my pocket and scatter the burning vestas over the grass. I should have thought this incident unique, but Alec Hearne, to whom I told it, assured me that he had seen more than one accident of the kind. W. G. was greatly amused. "Couldn't get you out—had to set you on fire!" he cried in the high voice which seemed so queer from so big a body.

There are certain matches which stand out on one's memory for their peculiar surroundings. One was a match played against Cape de Verde at that island, on the way to South Africa. There is an Atlantic telegraph station there with a large staff, and they turn out an excellent eleven. I understand that they played each transport as it passed, and that they had defeated all, including the Guards. We made up a very fair team, however, under the captaincy of Lord Henry Scott, and after a hard fight we defeated the islanders.

I don't know how many of our eleven left their bones in South Africa; three at least—Blasson, Douglas Forbes (who made our top score), and young Maxwell Craig—never returned.

I remember one even more tragic match in which I played for the Incogniti against Aldershot Division a few months before the African War. The regiments quartered there were those which afterwards saw the hardest service. Major Ray, who made the top score, was killed at Magersfontein. Young Stanley, who went in first with me, met his death in the Yeomanry. Taking the two teams right through, I am sure that half the men were killed or wounded within two years. How little we could have foreseen it that sunny summer day!

It is dangerous when an old cricketer begins to reminisce, because so much comes back to his mind. He has but to smell the hot rubber of a bat handle to be flooded



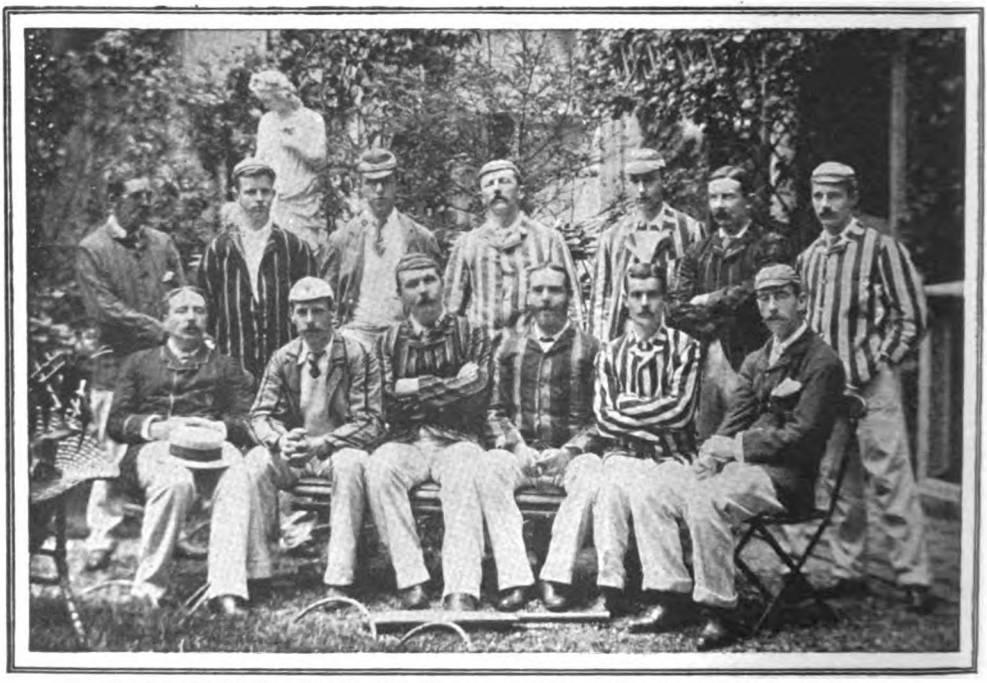
I could see no reason why every one of these delightful slows should not mean a four to me. But W. G. had his speedy revenge.

with memories. They are not always glorious. I remember three ladies coming to see me play against one of the Bedford Grammar Schools. The boys courteously applauded as I approached the wicket. A very small boy lobbed up the first ball, which I played at, and it went up into the air and was caught at point by the very smallest boy I have ever seen in decent cricket. It seemed to me about a mile as I walked back from the wicket to the pavilion. I don't think those three ladies ever recovered their confidence in my cricketing powers.

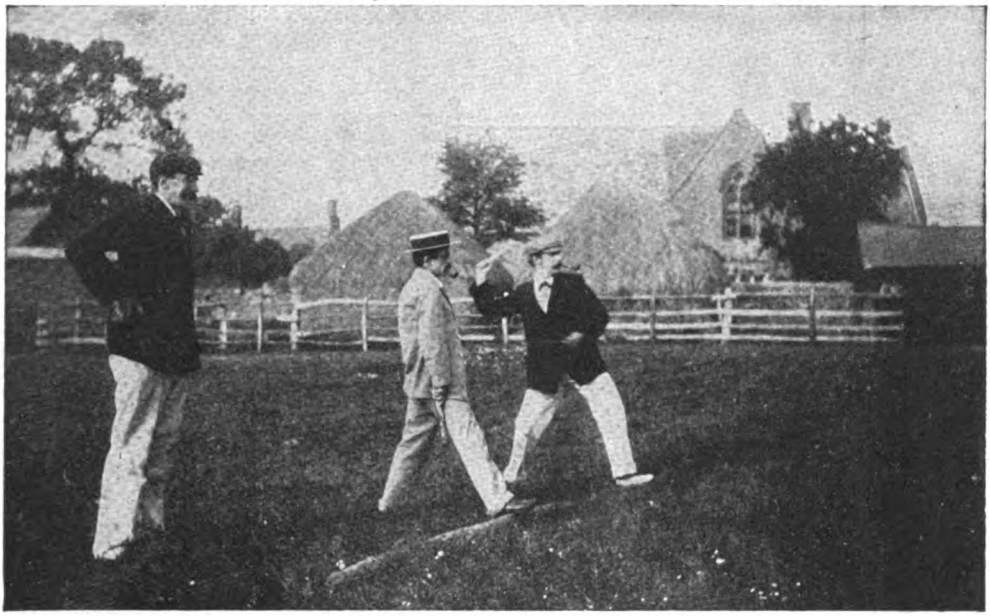
As a set-off to this confession of failure let me add a small instance of success, where by "taking thought" I saved a minor international match. It was at The Hague in 1892, and the game was a wandering British team against Holland. The Dutch were an excellent sporting lot, and had one remarkable bowler in Posthuma, a left-hander, who had so huge a break with his slow ball that it was not uncommon for him to pitch the ball right outside the matting on which we played and yet bring it on to the wicket. We won our various local matches without much difficulty, but we were aware that we should have a stiff fight with United Holland, the more so as Dutch hospitality was almost as dangerous to our play as Dutch cricket.

So it proved, and we were in the position that with four wickets in hand they had only about fifteen runs to make with two batsmen well set. I had not bowled during the tour, for as we were a scratch team, mostly from the schoolmaster class, we did not know each other's capacity. Seeing, however, that things were getting desperate I went the length of asking our skipper to give me a chance.

I had observed that the batsmen had been very well taught by their English professional, and that they all played in most orthodox fashion with a perfectly straight bat. That was why I thought I might get them out. I brought every fielder round to the off, for I felt that they would not think it correct to pull, and I tossed up good-length balls about a foot to the off of the stumps. It came off exactly as I expected. The pro. had not told them what to do with that particular sort of tosh, and the four men were all caught for as many runs by mid-off or cover. The team in their exultation proceeded to carry me into the pavilion, but whether it was my sixteen stone or the heat of the weather, they tired of the job midway and let me down with a crash which shook the breath out of me—so Holland was avenged. I played against them again when they came to England and made sixty-seven, but got no wickets, for they had mastered the off-side theory.



A. Conan Doyle with the British team that played against Holland in 1892.



THE LATE H. J. FORD. J. M. BARRIE. BERNARD PARTRIDGE.

A game of Aunt Sally—an interlude during one of the tours of J. M. Barrie's cricket team.

Some of my quaintest cricket reminiscences are in connection with J. M. Barrie's team—the "Allah-Akbarries," or "Lord help us," as we were called. We played in the old style, caring less about the game and a good deal about a jolly time and pleasant scenery. Broadway, the country home of Mr. Navarro and his wife, formerly Mary Anderson, the famous actress, was one of our favourite haunts, and for several years in succession we played the artists there. Bernard Partridge, Barrie, A. E. W. Mason, Abbey, the Academician, Blomfield, the architect, Marriott Watson, Charles Whibley, and others of note took part, and there were many whimsical happenings, which were good fun if they were not good cricket. I thought all record of our games had faded from human ken, but not long ago a controversy was raised over Mr. Armstrong, the Australian captain, bowling consecutive overs to the same man from opposite ends. This led to the following paragraph in a Birmingham paper, which, I may say, entirely exaggerates my powers but is otherwise correct.

BARRIE AND ARMSTRONG.

"I am not surprised that in the matter of Mr. Armstrong's conduct in bowling two consecutive overs from different ends no reference has been made to the important precedent which on a similar occasion Sir James Barrie failed to establish (writes a correspondent of the *Nation*). The occasion was his captaincy (at Broadway, in Worcestershire) of an eleven of writers against a strong team of alleged artists. The circumstances were these. One side had compiled seventy-two runs, chiefly, if not wholly, contributed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

"The sun-worshippers had thereupon responded with an equal number of runs for the loss of all but their last wicket. The ninth wicket had fallen to the last ball of Sir Arthur's over, the other eight having succumbed to the same performer, then in his prime. Actuated, apparently, by the belief that Sir Arthur was the only bowler of his side capable of taking or reaching a wicket, even in Worcestershire, Sir James thereupon put him on at the opposite end.

"Before, however, he could take a practice ball, a shout was heard from the artists' pavilion, and the nine unengaged players were seen issuing from it to contest our captain's decision. After an exciting contest, it was ultimately given by them in their favour, with the result that the first ball of the new bowler was hit for two, assisted by overthrows, and the innings and match were won by the artists."

GOLF.

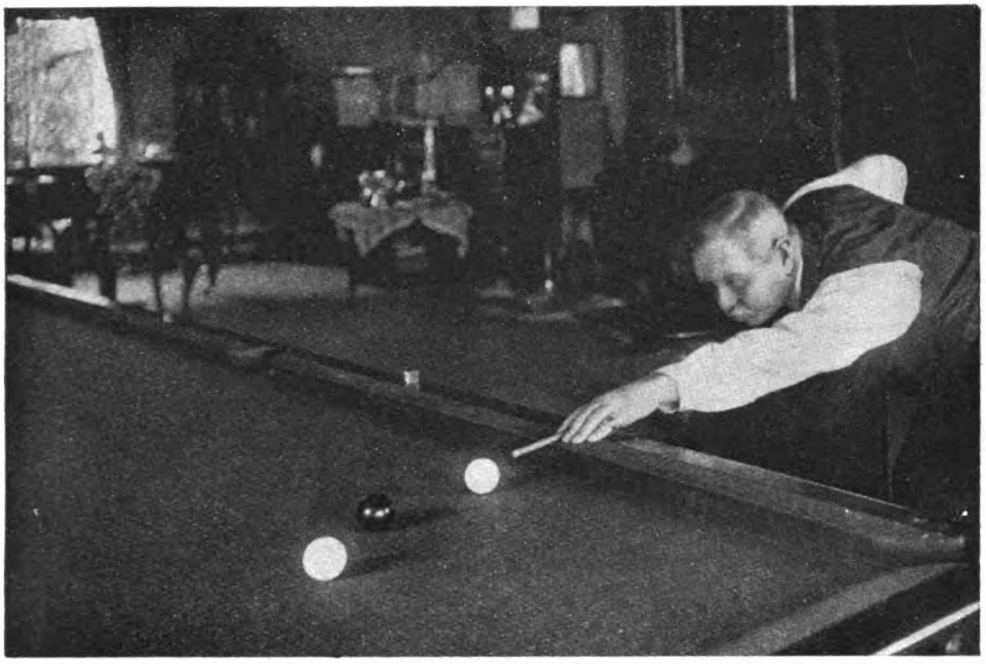
PERSONALLY I was an enthusiastic, but a most inefficient, golfer—a ten at my best, and at my worst outside the pale of all decent handicaps. But surely it is a great testimony to the qualities of a game when a

man can be both enthusiastic and inefficient. It is a proof at least that a man plays for the game's sake and not for personal kudos. Golf is the coquette of games. It always lures one on and always evades one. Ten years ago I thought I had nearly got it. And hope still survives. But my scoring cards will show, I fear, that the coquette has not yet been caught. The middle-aged lover cannot hope to win her smile.

I used in my early golfing days to practise on the very rudimentary links in front of the Mena Hotel, just under the Pyramids. It was a weird ground, where, if you sliced your ball, you might find it bunkered in the grave of some Rameses or Thothmes of old. It was here, I believe, that the cynical stranger, after watching my energetic but ineffectual game, remarked that he had always understood that there was a special tax for excavating in Egypt. I have a pleasant recollection of Egyptian golf in a match played with the late Sirdar, then head of the Intelligence Department. When my ball was teed I observed that his negro caddie pointed two fingers at it and spat, which meant, as I was given to understand, that he cursed it for the rest of the game. Certainly I got into every hazard on the course, though I must admit that I have accomplished that when there was no Central African curse upon me. Those were the days before the reconquest of the Soudan, and I was told by Colonel Wingate—as he then was—that his spies coming down from Omdurman not unfrequently delivered their messages to him while carrying his golf clubs, to avoid the attention of the Calipha's spies, who abounded in Cairo. On this occasion the Sirdar beat me well, but with a Christian caddie I turned the tables on him at Dunbar.

Every now and then I give up the game in disgust at my own incompetence, but only to be lured on once more. Hunting in an old desk, I came upon an obituary which I had written for my game at some moment of special depression. It ran: "Sacred to the memory of my golf. It was never strong, being permanently afflicted with a deformed stance and an undeveloped swing. After long weakness cheerfully borne it finally succumbed, and was buried in the eighteenth hole, regretted by numerous caddies." However, it is out and about

When my ball was teed the Sirdar's caddie cursed it.



A. Conan Doyle in his billiard-room at Crowborough.

once more, none the worse for this premature interment, but with its old ailments more pronounced than ever.

BILLIARDS.

THERE is said to be a considerable analogy between golf and billiards, so much so that success in the one generally leads to success in the other. Personally, I have not found it so, for though I may claim, I suppose, to be above the average amateur at billiards, I am probably below him in golf. I have never quite attained the three-figure break, but I have so often topped the eighty, and even the ninety, that I have lived in constant hope. My friend the late General Drayson, who was a great authority upon the game, used to recommend that every player should ascertain what he called his "decimal," by which he meant how many innings it took him, whether scoring or not, to make a hundred. The number, of course, varies with the luck of the balls and the mood of the player; but, taken over a dozen or twenty games, it gives a fair average idea of the player's form, and a man by himself can in this way test his own powers. If, for example, a player could, on an average, score a hundred in twenty innings, then his average would be five, which is very fair amateur form. If a man finds his "decimal" rise as high as ten over a sequence of games, he may be sure that he can hold his own against most players that he is likely to meet. I dare say my own "decimal" when I was in practice would be from six to eight.

I was never good enough for the big matches, and though I once went in for the championship it was not out of any illusions about my game, but because I was specially asked to do so, as it was advisable to strengthen the undoubted amateur element in the contest. By the luck of a bye, and by beating a player who was about my own form, I got into the third round, when I ran across Mr. Evans, who eventually reached the final with my scalp as well as several others at his girdle. I made six hundred and fifty against his one thousand, which, as I was not helped by a bad fall from a motor bike a few days before, was as much as I could expect. Forty-two off the red was my best effort. Surely billiards is the king of all indoor games, and should have some writer who would do for it in prose what John Nyren did for cricket. I have never seen any worthy appreciation of its infinite varieties, from the forcing losing hazard which goes roaring into a top pocket with a clash upon the rail, to the feather stroke so delicate that it is only the quiver of reflected light upon the object ball which shows that it has indeed been struck. Greatest of all is the ball heavily loaded with side which drifts down the long cushion and then is sucked, against every apparent law, into the pocket as though it were the centre of a whirlpool.

Mr. E. V. Lucas is one who could do it with discernment.

FENCING.

OF fencing my experience has been limited, and yet I have seen enough to realize what a splendid toughening exercise it is. I nearly had an ugly mishap when practising it. I had visited a medical man in Southsea who was an expert with the foils, and at his invitation had a bout with him. I had put on the mask and glove, but was loath to have the trouble of fastening on the heavy chest plastron. He insisted, however, and his insistence saved me from an awkward wound, for, coming in heavily upon a thrust, his foil broke a few inches from the end, and the sharp point thus created went deeply into the pad which covered me. I learned a lesson that day.

On the whole, considering the amount of varied sport which I have done, I have come off very well as regards bodily injury. One finger broken at football, two at cricket (one after the other in the same season), the disablement of my knee—that almost exhausts it. Though a heavy man and quite an indifferent rider, I have never hurt myself in a fair selection of falls in the hunting field and elsewhere. Once when I was down the horse hit me over the eye with his forefoot, but I got off with a rather ragged wound, though it might have been very much more serious.

Indeed, when it comes to escapes, I have had more than my share of luck. One of the worst was in a motor accident, when the machine, which weighed over a ton, ran up a high bank, threw me out on a gravel drive below, and then, turning over, fell on top of me. The steering wheel projected slightly from the rest and thus broke the impact and undoubtedly saved my life, but it gave way under the strain, and the weight of the car settled across my spine just below the neck, pinning my face down on to the gravel and pressing with such terrific force as to make it impossible to utter a sound. I felt the weight getting heavier moment by moment, and wondered how long my vertebræ could stand it. However, they did so long enough to enable a crowd to collect and the car to be levered off me. I should think there are few who can say that they have held up a ton weight across their spine and lived unparalysed to talk about it. It is an acrobatic feat which I have no desire to repeat.

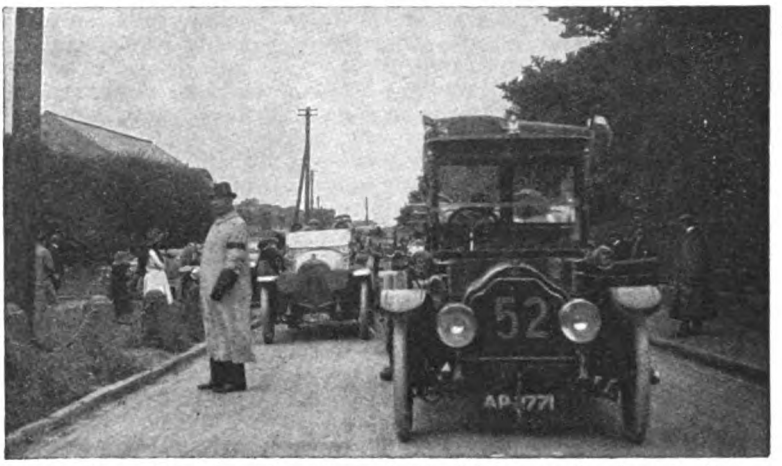
Horse and cart fell sideways on the other horse and cart, and there was such a mixture that you could not disentangle it.

MOTORING.

THERE is plenty of sport in driving one's own motor and meeting the hundred-and-one unexpected roadside adventures and difficulties which are continually arising. These were greater a few years ago, when motors were themselves less solidly and accurately constructed, drivers were less skilled, and frightened horses were more in evidence. No invention of modern civilization has done so much for developing a man's power of

resource and judgment as the motor. To meet and overcome a sudden emergency is the best of human training, and if a man is his own driver and mechanician on a fairly long journey, he can hardly fail to have some experience of it.

I well remember, in the early days of motoring, going up to Birmingham to take delivery of my new twelve h.p. Wolseley. I had invested in the sort of peaked yachting cap which was considered the correct badge of the motorist in those days, but as I paced the platform of New Street Station a woman removed any conceit I might have over my headgear by asking me peremptorily how the trains ran to Walsall. She took me for one of the officials.



A. Conan Doyle standing alongside the 16-h.p. car he drove in the competition organized by Prince Henry of Prussia.

I got the car safely home, and no doubt it was a good car as things went at that time, but the secret of safe brakes had not yet been discovered, and my pair used to break as if they were glass. More than once I have known what it is to steer a car when it is flying backwards under no control down a winding hill. Looking back at those days, it seems to me that I was under the car nearly as much as on the top of it, for every repair had to be done from below. There were few accidents, from smashing my differential, seizing my engines, and stripping my gears, which I have not endured. It was a chain-driven machine, and I can well remember one absurd incident when the chain jumped the cogs and fell off. We were on a long slope of three miles, and ran on with the engine turned off, quite unconscious of what had occurred. When we reached level ground the car naturally stopped, and we got out, opened the bonnet, tested the electricity, and were utterly puzzled as to what was amiss, when a yokel in a cart arrived, waving our motive power over his head. He had picked it up on the road.

Our descendants will never realize the terror of the horses at this innovation, nor the absurd scenes which it caused. On one occasion I was motoring down a narrow lane in Norfolk, with my mother in the open tonneau. Coming round a curve we came upon two carts, one behind the other. The leading horse, which had apparently never seen a motor before, propped his forelegs out, his ears shot forward, his eyes stared rigidly, and then in a moment he whirled round, ran up the bank, and tried to escape behind his comrade. This he could have done but for the cart, which he also dragged up the bank. Horse and cart fell sideways on the other horse and cart, and there was such a mixture that you could not disentangle it. The carts were full of turnips, and these formed a top-dressing over the interlaced shafts and the struggling horses. I sprang out, and was trying to help the enraged farmer to get something right-end up, when I glanced at my own car, which was almost involved in the pile. There was my dear old mother sitting calmly knitting in the midst of all the chaos. It was really like something in a dream.

My most remarkable motor-car experience was when I drove my own sixteen h.p. Dietrich-Lorraine in the International Road Competition organized by Prince Henry of Prussia in 1911. I have little doubt, looking back, that the whole contest was arranged to soften the national friction likely to be aroused by the Agadir incident, which occurred in the middle of it. As Prince Henry was the head of the German navy, it was impossible that he could have been ignorant of the fact that the tour and the descent of the *Panther* upon Southern Morocco were due upon the same date. It was a weird contest, extending over three weeks, with a mixture of British and Germans inhabiting this moving caravan, which numbered eighty cars. It was a test rather of the reliability of the car than of the skill of the driver. Each car had an

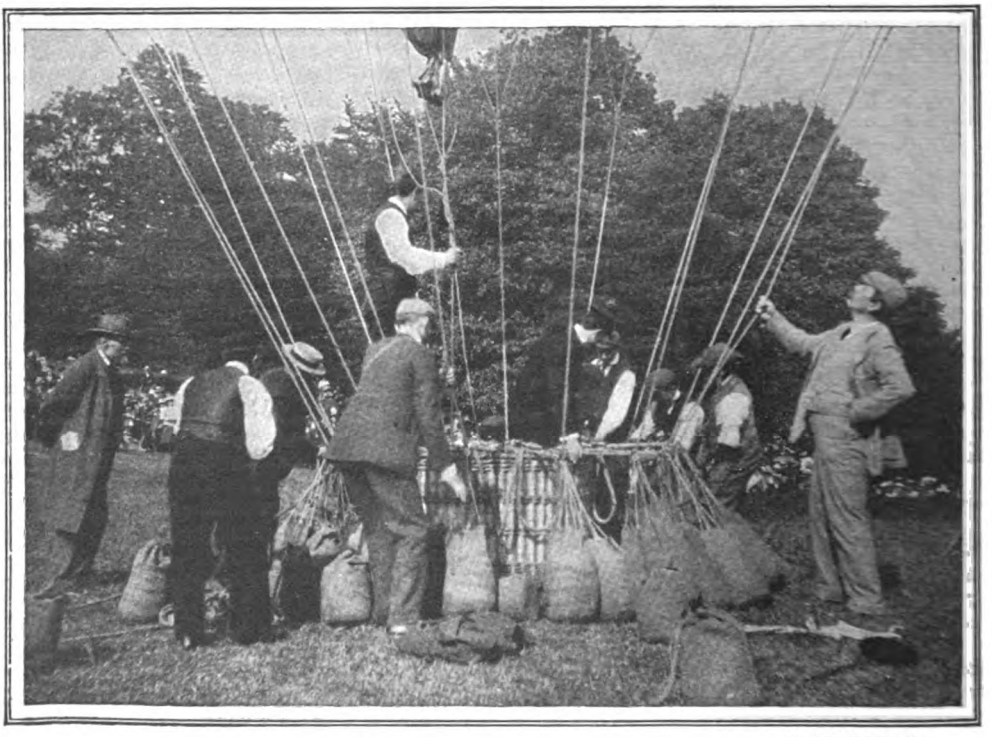
officer of the other nation within it as observer to deduct marks. Our observer was a Count Von Carmer, Rittmeister of the Breslau Cuirassiers, and I have often wondered whether he got through the war. He practically lived with my wife and myself for three weeks, and we learned to like and esteem him, so that next year he brought his charming wife to visit us and see something of English life.

The tour was not a success as developing international friendship.

The sinister impression left on my mind by the whole incident is shown by the fact that one of the first things I did when I got to London was to recommend a firm of which I am director to remove thirty thousand pounds which it had lying in Berlin. I have no doubt that it would have continued to lie there and that we might have lost it. As to the contest itself, it ended in a British victory, which was owing to the staunch way in which we helped each other when in difficulties, while the Germans were more a crowd of individuals than a team. Their cars were excellent, and so was their driving. My own little car did very well and only dropped marks at Sutton Bank in Yorkshire, that terrible hill, one in three at one point, with a hairpin bend. When we finally panted out our strength I put my light-weight chauffeur to the wheel, ran round, and fairly boosted her up from behind, but we were fined so many marks for my leaving the wheel. Not to get up would have meant three times the forfeit, so my tactics were well justified.

AVIATION.

NO doubt the coming science of aviation will develop the same qualities as motor driving, in an even higher degree. It is a form of sport in which I have only aspirations and little experience. I had one balloon ascent, in which we covered some twenty-five miles and ascended six thousand feet, which was so delightful an expedition that I have always been eager for another and a longer one. A man has a natural trepidation the first time he leaves the ground, but I remember that, as I stood by the basket with the gas-bag swinging about above me and the assistants clinging to the ropes, someone pointed out an elderly gentleman and said: "That is the famous Mr. So-and-so, the aeronaut." I saw a venerable person and I asked how many ascents he had made. "About a thousand," was the answer. No eloquence or reasoning



A. CONAN DOYLE.

Making the final preparations for a balloon voyage.

could have convinced me so completely that I might get into the basket with a cheerful mind, though I will admit that for the first minute or so one feels very strange, and keeps an uncommonly tight grip of the side-ropes. This soon passes, however, and one is lost in the wonder of the prospect and the glorious feeling of freedom and detachment. As in a ship, it is the moment of nearing land once more which is the moment of danger—or, at least, of discomfort; but, beyond a bump or two, we came to rest very quietly in the heart of a Kentish hop-field.

I had one aeroplane excursion in rather early days, but the experience was not entirely a pleasant one. Machines were under-engined in those days and very much at the mercy of the wind. We went up at Hendon—May 25th, 1911, was the date—but the machine was a heavy biplane, and though it went down wind like a swallow it was more serious when we turned and found, looking down, that the objects below us were stationary or even inclined to drift backwards. However, we got back to the field at last, and I think the pilot was as relieved as I. What impressed me most was the terrible racket of the propeller, comparing so unfavourably with the delicious calm of the balloon journey.

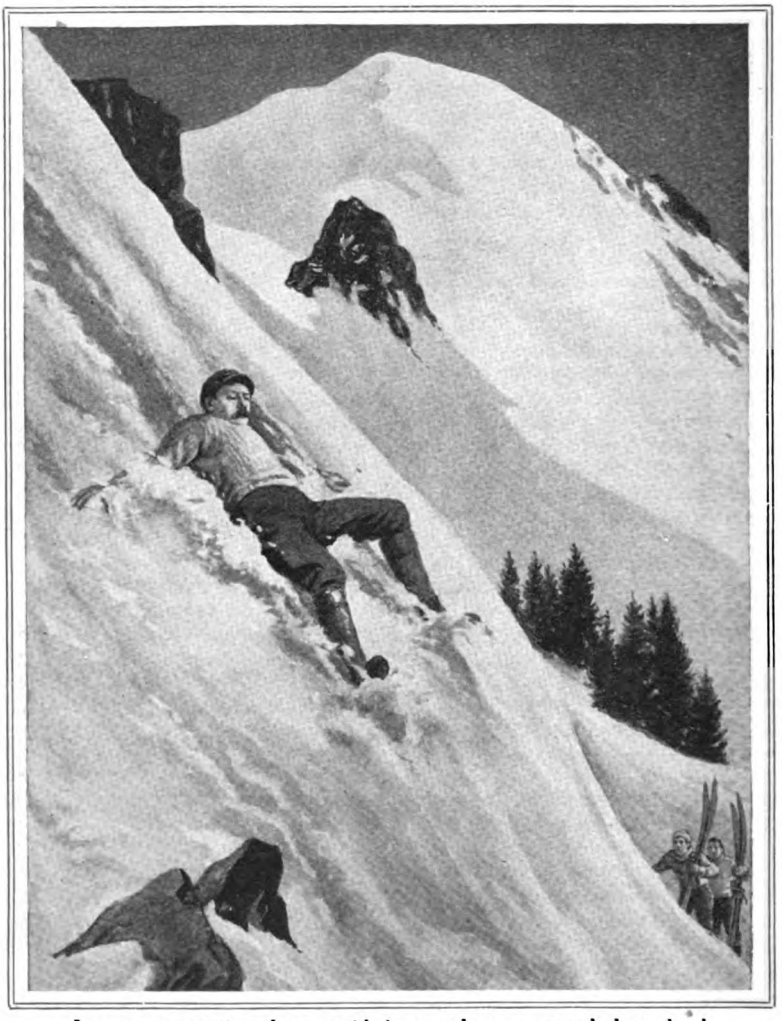
SKI-ING.

THERE is one form of sport in which I have, I think, been able to do some practical good, for I can claim to have been the first to introduce skis into the Grisons division of Switzerland, or at least to demonstrate their practical utility as a means of getting across in winter from one valley to another. It was in 1894 that I read Nansen's account of his crossing of Greenland, and thus became interested in the subject of ski-ing. It chanced that I was compelled to spend that winter in the Davos valley, and I spoke about the matter to Tobias Branger, a sporting tradesman in the village, who in turn interested his brother. We sent for skis from Norway, and for some weeks afforded innocent amusement to a large number of people, who watched our awkward movements and complex tumbles. The Brangers made much better progress than I. At the end of a month or so we felt that we were getting more expert, and determined to climb the Jacobshorn, a considerable hill just opposite the Davos Hotel. We had to carry our unwieldy skis upon our backs until we had passed the fir trees which line its slopes, but once in the open we made splendid progress and had the satisfaction of seeing the flags in the village dipped in our honour when we reached the summit. But it was only in returning that we got the full flavour of ski-ing. In ascending you shuffle up by long zigzags, the only advantage of your footgear being that it is carrying you over snow which would engulf you without it. But coming back you simply turn your long toes and let yourself go, gliding delightfully over the gentle slopes, flying down the steeper ones, taking an occasional cropper, but getting as near to flying as any earthbound man can. In that glorious air it is a delightful experience.

Encouraged by our success with the Jacobshorn, we determined to show the utility of our accomplishment by opening up communications with Arosa, which lies in a parallel valley, and can only be reached in winter by a very long and roundabout railway journey. To do this we had to cross a high pass and then drop down on the other side. It was a most interesting journey, and we felt all the pride of pioneers as we arrived in Arosa.

I have no doubt that what we did would seem absurdly simple to Norwegians or others who were apt at the game, but we had to find out things for ourselves, and it was sometimes rather terrifying. The sun had not yet softened the snow on one sharp slope across which we had to go, and we had to stamp with our skis in order to get any foothold. On our left the snow slope seemed to end in a chasm from which a blue smoke of fog rose in the morning air. I hardly dared look in that direction, but from the corner of my eye I saw the vapour of the abyss. I stamped along and the two gallant Switzers got on to my left, so that if I slipped the shock would come upon them. We had no rope by which we could link up. We got across all right, and perhaps we exaggerated the danger, but it was not a pleasant experience.

Then I remember that we came to an absolute precipice, up which, no doubt, the path zigzags in summer. It was not, of course, perpendicular, but it seemed little removed from it, and it had just slope enough to hold the snow. It looked impassable, but the Brangers had picked up a lot in some way of their own. They took off their skis, fastened them together with a thong, and on this toboggan they sat, pushing themselves over the edge, and going down amid a tremendous spray of flying snow. When they had reached safety they beckoned to me to follow. I had done as they did, and was sitting on my ski preparatory to launching myself when a fearsome thing happened, for my ski shot from under me, flew down the slope, and vanished in huge bounds among the snow mounds beyond. It was a nasty moment, and the poor Brangers stood looking up at me from some hundreds of



I came squattering down, with legs and arms extended to check the momentum.

feet below in a dismal state of mind. However, there was no possible choice as to what to do, so I did it. I let myself go over the edge, and came squattering down, with legs and arms extended to check the momentum. A minute later I was rolling, covered with snow, at the feet of my guides, and my ski were found some hundreds of yards away, so no harm was done after all.

I remember that when we signed the hotel register Tobias Branger filled up the space after my name, in which the new arrival had to describe his profession, by the word "Sportesmann," which I took as a compliment. It was at any rate more pleasant than the German description of my golf clubs, which went astray in the railway and turned up at last with the official description of "Kinderspieler" (child's toys) attached to them.

To return to the skis, they are no doubt in very general use, but I think I am right in saying that these and other excursions of ours first demonstrated their possibilities to the people of the country, and have certainly sent a good many thousands of pounds since then into Switzerland.

IF my rather rambling career in sport has been of any practical value to anyone it is probably in this matter, and also, perhaps, in the opening up of miniature rifle-ranges in 1901, when the idea was young in this country, and when my Hindhead range was the pioneer and the model for many others.

A pleasing souvenir of my work on Rifle Clubs is to be found in the Conan Doyle Cup, which was presented by my friend, Mr. John Langman, and is still shot for every year at Bisley by civilian teams.

On the whole, as I look back, there is no regret in my mind for the time which I have spent on sport. It gives health and strength; but, above all, it gives a certain sanity of mind without which a man is not complete. To give and to take, to accept success modestly and endure defeat bravely, to fight and go on fighting against odds, to stick to your point, to give credit to your enemy and to value your friend—these are some of the lessons which true sport imparts.

(*To be continued.*)

CONFESSORS

by

PERCEVAL GIBBON

ILLUSTRATED BY
E. G. OAKDALE

THEY had seen the woman and remarked her; but they had not seen the man who, it was rumoured to them, lay sick to death in the long one-storeyed stone cottage which overlooked the fishing harbour and the rock-fanged ship-trap of the coast of Brittany.

It came about thus. The Reverend Samuel Hale was sitting humped on his camp-stool before his tiny easel, happy, intent, and paint-smeared—there was some flake-white on his spectacles. He was Vicar of Wallingdon in Kent, a benefice that yielded him the income of a farm-labourer; but he had his tiny patrimony, and Susie, his wife, had hers; so that each year, after the Harvest Festival, it was possible for them to take their little economical holiday on the Continent. He was a smallish, plump man, balancing on the brink of middle-age; he would have been entirely sleek and dormouse-like but for a certain alertness and energy of his friendly and mirthful face. And he believed, against all the evidence, that he could paint.

Susie, his wife, sat near him upon the short, crisp grass. A person walking on the cliff-path beside them would have seen her in profile as she squatted in woollen jumper and tweed skirt, her good stout ankles in their good stout stockings crossed, her hands clasped upon her knees. She, too, was plump—plump, not fat—with a becoming band of freckles across the shining and simple honesty of her face, which moved in a slow circuit from the sunlit glory of the Channel to the red-brown grandeur of the rocks and always came to rest at last upon the absorbed and happy face of the Reverend Samuel.

And so the woman from the long one-storeyed cottage must first have observed them, for it was along the cliff-path above the harbour that she came, moving with silent feet and a quality of gait that gave her the effect not of striding but guiding. A great clarity of September sunlight showed them starkly against the green of the turf at the cliff-head and the wide, diamond-clear vista of umber rock and stone-blue sea below; they sat in a quiet companionship like a tranquil domesticity. She came behind them noiselessly and paused, looking past the Reverend Samuel's head at his daring and dreadful handiwork; so that it was some seconds before Susie was aware of her with a start and a little exclamation.

"Eh?" The vicar, brush in hand, turned at the sound and showed to the new-comer his mild and genial face. He stared for an instant, then struggled upright from his low stool and raised his soft black hat with the hand that held the paint-brush.

"Morning," he said. "Good morning! Er—charming weather we're having for September. Charming—eh?"

He beamed at her sociably, but for some while she did not reply. She looked from his little canvas to him and thence to Susie, seeming to scrutinize them with exactly the same passing interest she had given to the picture, even with something of the same veiled and tolerant amusement. She was tall, a full half-head taller than the Reverend Samuel, and boyishly slender; her face was of an even, creamy pallor; and in her mere posture, in her every movement and change of expression, there showed—though not to the little clergyman and his wife—a trained perfection of the art of demeanour.

Copyright, 1924, by Perceval Gibbon.

The Reverend Samuel, speaking of her later, guessed her age to be about thirty; but he would have found it difficult to picture her as the child she must once have been or the aged woman she might yet become; she seemed to ride at anchor while the current of time flowed past her.

It occurred to him that she had not understood his English. He tried her again in what he had of French.

"Beau tong!" he suggested. "Très beau tong—eh?"

She smiled then, looked at him a moment longer, and spoke.

"A charming day, indeed," she said, in English that was only just flavoured with her French accent.

And still smiling she bent her head in a small bow of salutation and passed on along the path. Both remained looking after her. A hundred yards off, Bates, the American painter from Paris, was at work; she paused close behind him but she did not so much as glance aside at his canvas, nor did Bates turn his head. Then the path dipped with the contour of the cliff-head and she was gone.

THE REVEREND SAMUEL and Susie looked at each other. Both were conscious that they had had an experience, but neither knew what it was.

"Curious!" said the vicar. "Did she just stop to look at my picture?"

Susie did not answer the question. "That's the woman from the cottage above the harbour," she said. "There's a sick man there, too; the landlady was telling me about it. I could not understand all she said, but she insisted he was 'très célèbre'! That means," she interpreted kindly, "'very celebrated.' And oh! Sam, did you notice her clothes?"

The Reverend Samuel hadn't, of course. "She seemed very quietly dressed," he ventured.

"Quietly!" cried Susie. "I should think she *was* quietly dressed. Queens and princesses dress like that. Quietly indeed! Sam, you never notice anything. Did you see her face?"

Her husband nodded. "Yes," he said. "I saw her face, dear. Er—unusual sort of face, I thought."

Susie gave a sniff of impatience. "I don't think she stopped to look at your picture," she said then. "I think it was because she saw you were a clergyman. Sam, that woman is in trouble!"

"Oh?" The vicar looked up. "How d'you mean—trouble?"

"Dreadful trouble," repeated Susie. "I was watching her, and she's very unhappy. Don't I always know?"

"Ye-es," he agreed, slowly, and nodded a serious head. For it was true that Susie always knew. In their parish at home, her ministry was to sore hearts and sick spirits. She had a nose like a hound for secret misery and masked fear; she was the inviolable repository of shuddering confessions and heart-broken confidences, even as her great gift of compassion and understanding was the shield and safeguard of the broken and the helpless. Yes, Susie always knew.

"Perhaps she'll come again," he suggested.

Susie shook her head. She had understood that slow, estimating scrutiny and the eventual smile. She had not even resented them, but it was clear to her that the Reverend Samuel had been weighed in some unusual balance and found wanting.

"I don't think so," she answered. "She's probably a Roman Catholic, anyhow—if she's anything. But if I get a chance——"

Her husband nodded again. "You may," he said. "But I wish, all the same, she'd said something about this picture. She looked as if she had taste."

Susie smiled. "With those clothes," she said; "oh, yes, she had taste!"

It chanced that the following morning brought letters for the Reverend Samuel, and after breakfast he sat down to answer them.

"I shall go up the cliff," said Susie, "to where we were yesterday. You'll follow as soon as you can, won't you?"

He blinked up at her where she stood beside his table.

"You're thinking you may meet—er——"

"Yes," she answered. "It's just possible." She paused, looking down at him seriously and a little absently.

"What is it, dear?" he asked.

"That man in the long cottage, who is so ill——" She halted again. "He isn't her husband. The landlady told me," she concluded.

"Oh!"

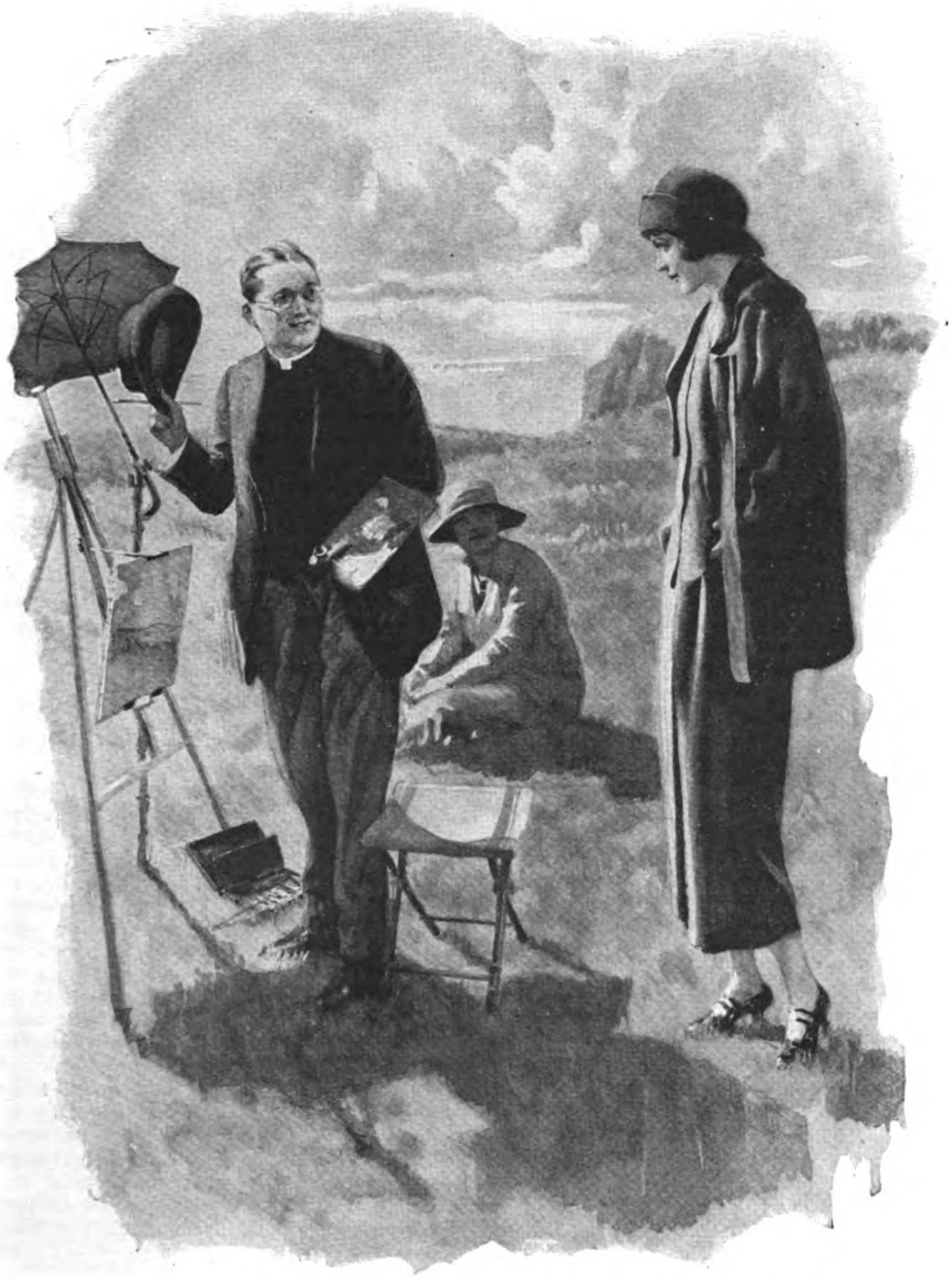
Susie tossed her head. "Not that it matters," she said. "He's very ill, and she's very unhappy. That comes first, doesn't it, Sam? But I thought you'd better know."

She gave him no time to ponder, but bent swiftly, kissed him on the crown of the head, and departed.

"This," reflected the Reverend Samuel Hale, "is absurd! This is—er—awkward." He meditated. "However—we're Christians!"

And he went to work at his letters.

It was about an hour and a half later, towards eleven o'clock of a morning with a sun that shone like a pale jewel—mere brilliance without warmth—and a livening little goad of wind, that he arrived, burdened



The vicar beamed at her sociably, but for some while she did not reply.

with easel, stool, japanned paint-box, and palette, at the rendezvous appointed by Susie. The turf was green and vacant; there was no Susie. In the background a large cow, with an overcoat of sacking, browsed at the end of a chain that was

looped round its horns; and in his usual place was Bates, working faithfully on his Salon picture, a gaunt, sharp-angled figure, ungainly as a step-ladder against the arch of sky.

The Reverend Samuel grunted discontentedly, but proceeded to unload himself and set up his easel. He had put his unfinished—and unfinishable—canvas in place when Bates strolled up, palette hooked on his thumb, extinct pipe drooping from his mouth.

"Nice light," said Bates. "What's that you've got there?"

He lowered his long, sun-tanned horse-face to the vicar's little canvas. He was a man something over six feet tall, who made the impression of being, physically, a mere framework of steel and hickory. He was an accomplished cosmopolitan and a painter of something more than mere promise. He was dressed in old flannel trousers and tweed coat; but he affected the eccentricity of foppishly exquisite shoes and linen. He was that incredible thing, a clean Bohemian.

"I can see what you're aiming for," he said, when he had stared the poor little daub out of face. "Gimme that brush—that little feller!" He reached out and took the brush he wanted, and began to mess among the colours on his palette with it. "Got a message from Mrs. Hale for you, too. She won't be back to lunch, but she'll be along some time. Now watch this!"

He laid a brushful of colour on the canvas and began to work.

"Not back for lunch!" exclaimed the Reverend Samuel. "But—— But why? Where has she gone?"

Bates flashed a sidelong glance at him. His long and ugly face was sardonic by habit; his was the tolerant and uncritical cynicism which only big, broad men can develop in big, broad countries. A hard man who had never been hard on any living thing; a strong man who had never been cruel, a rich man who had never been mean, a genius—of sorts—who had never been contemptuous—that was Bates.

"You want to watch this," he said, shelving the brush and getting to work with a smudging thumb. "Breadth—see? Oh, your wife? She met up with the Davielle, and she's gone home with her. Had an idea she could do some good, I suppose. Now, see the difference in your effect? If you follow that up——"

The Reverend Samuel swore. "Dash it!" he said. "What are you talking about? Who is the What's-his-name? Where has Susie gone?"

Bates stood looking at what he had done to the little canvas. He had brought it to life—that's all!

"Oh, that!" he said. "La Davielle—saw you talking to her here yesterday. Lives in that long, low house down above the harbour—*you* know! The two of 'em came along the path, and Mrs. Hale came over the grass to me and asked me to give you that message soon's you arrived. Then they went off."

"I see!" The vicar stood as though in thought. "Who *is* this Mrs.—er—Davielle? Can you tell me?"

Bates turned at that and for an instant an amused surprise flickered on his face.

"La Davielle? Louise Davielle? No, I s'pose you wouldn't know; not in your line; but she's a pretty famous person in Paris and so forth. Actress ostensibly, and rather a splendid one; but chiefly just a personality. You can be just that in Paris, you know, and thrive on it. Knows everybody, sees everything, and cares for nothing. Kind of creature you wouldn't stand for in London; but in Paris there's two or three of 'em who *are* Paris. Damn them, I say!"

The Reverend Samuel knitted his brows. "You mean—a bad woman?"

BATES sat himself down on the little camp-stool, laid his palette on the grass by his side, and re-kindled his pipe ere he answered. The little vicar stood, feet apart, his hands joined behind his back, and watched him gravely, awaiting his reply.

Bates threw down his match, trod it out, and looked up suddenly.

"Don't get me wrong over this, Padre," he said. "Dirt is only matter in the wrong place; an' bad people are just the same. The devil's a prominent citizen in Hell—savvy?—but he's pretty bad medicine this side o' the river. Well, the Davielle—she's beautiful; she's paintable, anyhow; she's clever as a snake; she's got the talents of a wagon-load of Académiciens; an' she fits in where she belongs as snug as the gold in a tooth. But where you are, an' where Mrs. Hale is, she's just matter in the wrong place. She's dirt."

The vicar shook his head. For a man who normally composed and preached two sermons every week he was singularly inarticulate. He found no words in which to express his unshakable conviction that human beings, who are mere anchors, holding immortal souls to earth, can never be just dirt.

"Who is the man in her house?" he asked, abruptly. "The sick man. Do you know?"

"Dunois," answered Bates, promptly. "*You* know," he added. "Felix Dunois; you must have heard of him."

But the other only shook his head again

and stood waiting, still in the same attitude and with the same gravity of countenance.

Bates frowned. "You're older than I am, Padre," he said; "but somehow you make me feel as if I were corruptin' your innocence. . . . It's only because Mrs. Hale's down there that I'm tellin' you all this. It's not pretty, but you've asked for it, haven't you?"

The vicar seemed to hesitate. "Go on!" he said at last.

Bates shrugged resignedly. "He's a kind of he Davielle," he said. "He was, at any rate, till the scandal that surged up and swamped him. Critic and connoisseur, dramatist in a small way, wit, and man about town; but chiefly, like her, a figure, a part of the life and character of Paris—that was him. You'd see him at the Opéra, at the Salon, at every first night; you'd see him coming down the boulevard, with his high head, his beautiful white hair, and his little wise pitying half-smile for all God's creation—with folks turning to look and nudging each other—a thing as brilliant and foul as a witty blasphemy, a parasite, a louse bloodsucking upon the body of Art.

Felix Dunois.

"That was Dunois. He didn't last; he wasn't made of the stuff that lasts. You remember—no, o' course you wouldn't have heard of it—well, there was a sort of a shindy in the studio of a feller named Flavien, a portrait-painter. About thirty people, men and women mixed, a lot of 'em pretty well known. Dunois was one of 'em, of course; that kind of thing couldn't be complete unless Dunois at least looked in. The studio was at the top of a tall old building half-way up the hill of Montmartre, with flights of stairs to go up and no lift, the perfect place for the thing to happen that did happen, and just what that was no living man knows—unless Dunois knows!

"The way the police and the fire department figured it out was like this. A fire started on the second floor, probably from an escape of gas, an' went shooting up the well of the staircase to the top floor before the poor gay fools in Flavien's studio knew anything about it. First they did know, it was on them, with the smoke pouring in and the floor catching alight under their feet—five storeys up and the fire barricading the stairs! There'd be a screaming panic, of course; some 'ud try the stairs and be driven back scorched with their clothes on fire; some would be yelling for help from the windows; an' then somebody—Flavien it would be—would remember! There was still a way out! He'd shout it out an' lead the way with a rush, and the whole lot would come tearing after him in a crazy fighting jam.

"Y'see, there was a flat roof to the house, and in the summer Flavien used to have an awning there, with chairs an' Chinese lanterns an' all that sort o' thing. There was a trap in the ceiling of his bedroom with a single spiral of toy staircase leading up to it. It was hardly big enough to carry a grown man; and here the whole thirty of them must ha' piled up, fighting to get up an' out, trampling each other, murdering each other, maniac with terror. Some of 'em were found, what was left of 'em. It wasn't much, but it told the story pretty clearly.

" By this time, of course, there was a crowd in the street and every window and every roof within eyeshot of the place was packed with folks looking on. So that there were hundreds who could swear to seeing a man come jumping through the trap from Flavien's place and dash along the roof towards the parapet that divided it from the roof of the next house. None followed him; he must have stamped and smashed his way over the bodies of the others, men and women alike, while the fire grew and gathered them in. They saw him running among the tall chimney-pillars, lit by the flames that began to stream up from the trap; he was tall, they said, and they could make out the smirched white of his waistcoat and shirt-front, and there were some—there were many—who swore that he had white hair.

" And a few declared they had recognized him as Dunois ! "

" Ah ! " breathed the Reverend Samuel.

" No ! " said Bates. " It wasn't as simple as that. The fire happened at half-past ten. At half-past eleven some people went to Davielle's flat to tell her the news, and there was Dunois, sitting with her in her salon, clean, calm, immaculate, with no trace of a struggle, no stain of an escape among the chimney-pots. The story of the fire was news to him. He had looked in at Flavien's for a few minutes only; he had arrived in Davielle's flat just before her, and had been there ever since. The Davielle and her maid corroborated him; it was an ironclad alibi, unbreakable and unbendable. It would have been perfect, if only people had believed it. But they didn't. He had hurt and slighted too many people; now was their chance. Of course, he made a fight for it; he fought three ferocious duels and killed two of his opponents, but he couldn't kill the story ! All his fame, his talent, and his appearance availed him nothing. He was snuffed out like a candle.

" Paris doesn't know where he is, and doesn't care. It would only laugh if it heard that a firefly like the Davielle had sunk so far below her level as to be loyal to a broken man like him. But—now you know where Mrs. Hale is, Padre. What are you going to do about it ? "

The Reverend Samuel unclasped the hands that were joined behind his back and felt in his pocket for his pipe and pouch.

" Do ? " he repeated. " What am I going to do ? Why, lunch alone, of course."

Bates eyed him for some seconds doubtfully. Then he smiled.

" Of course," he said. " I was a fool not to think of that. You're all right, Padre. Now, look here, while I show you what I mean about broadening this effect you've got here."

And while the Reverend Samuel smoked and listened, eager and interested, Bates lectured and demonstrated, and the little picture ripened to beauty like a flower in the sun.

IT was five o'clock that afternoon when Susie returned to the inn and found her husband sitting in the little arbour, roofed with russet-glowing vine-leaves, where upon fine mornings they were wont to breakfast. His picture was propped on the table before him, and he was gazing at it with an air of utter dejection.

" Hullo ! " cried Susie, entering. " Why, Sam, what's the matter ? "

The vicar looked up and sighed. " I'll have to give up trying to paint," he said. " It's no good. Look at this thing here ! "

Susie looked, and was puzzled. " But it's splendid; it's the best thing you've ever done."

The vicar nodded. " Bates worked on it half the morning," he answered. " He was trying to teach me. He only taught me that I can't paint. Ah, well ! " He put the canvas from him and turned in his chair to face her. " What's the news ? "

" Bates doesn't know everything," said Susie, indignantly. " Bates, indeed ! "

She sat herself down upon the bench at the end of the arbour.

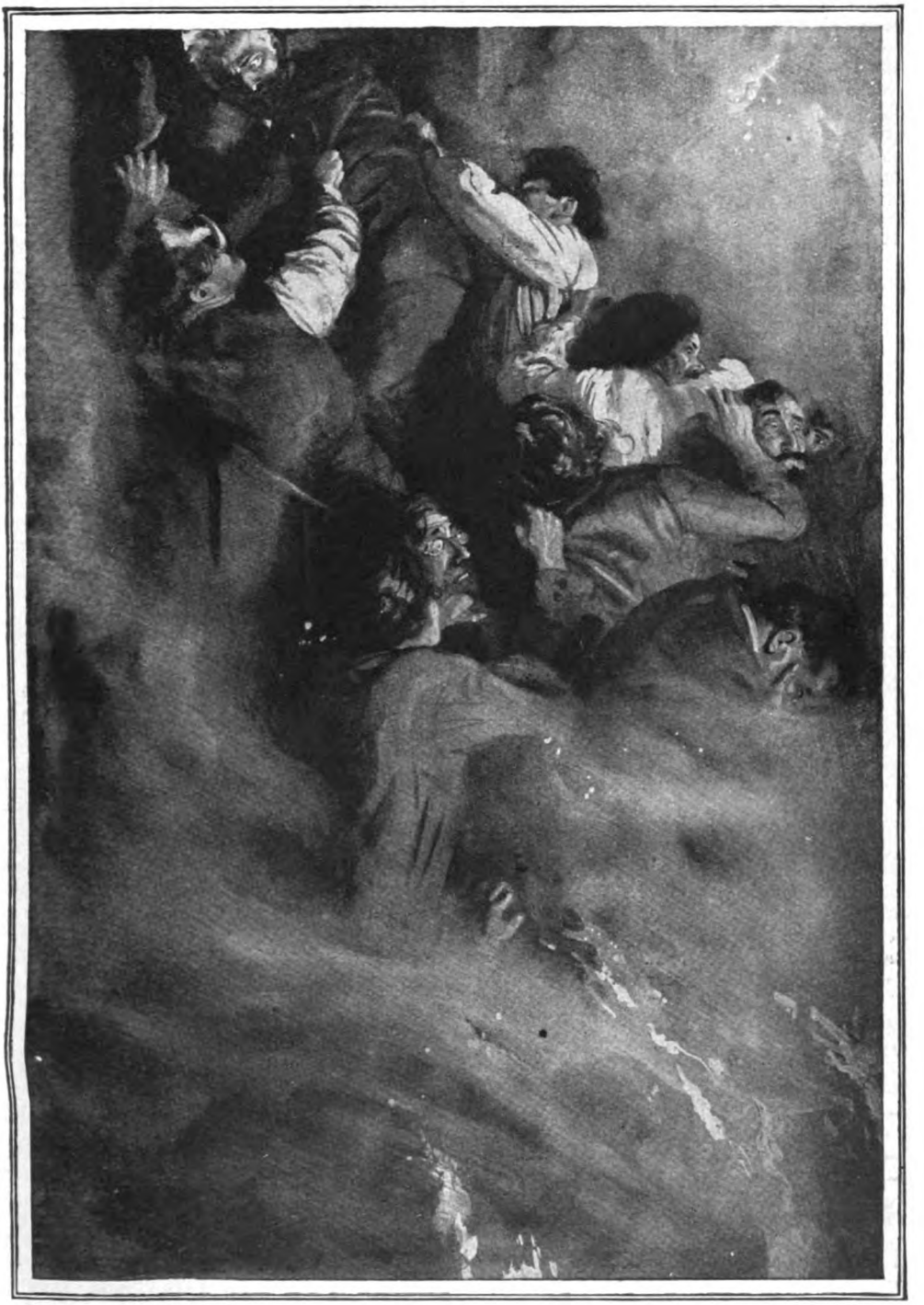
" Sam," she said, " that house is a wonderful place. Going into it from the road is like going into a theatre when the curtain's already up and the play has started. It isn't *real*, Sam ! There isn't a thing in that ugly, ordinary Breton cottage that isn't a jewel of its kind. The linen, Sam, the glass and china, the furniture, and the silver—oh, I smashed the Tenth Commandment all to bits a hundred times. I went into Louise's bedroom——"

" Louise ? " queried her husband.

" She's the lady we spoke to yesterday. Louise Davielle. She's lovely, Sam. I went into her bedroom, and—oh, her dressing table ! It was like an altar or something, with all her gold brushes and jewel-cases and things made of amber and crystal and everything. I can't describe it even."

" You saw the—the others who live there ? "

" 'Course I did. There are only three. There's Louise, and a tall, elderly maid called Junie, and a Mr. Dunois. I had to tell you about the house first, but those three are the most wonderful things in it. You can't imagine them without those beautiful and extravagant things about them; they seem to fit them perfectly. But, Sam—Sam——"



The whole thirty of them were fighting to get up and out, trampling each other, murdering each other, maniac with terror.

Her voice had changed, and a shadow grew across her face.

"What, dear?" asked the vicar, quickly.

"I'm babbling like this," she went on, soberly, "because the real thing is difficult to tell properly. That house is—is chill and aching with pain and distress. You feel it everywhere, like a draught blowing on you. Junie, the maid, even, who hardly ever speaks—she is bowed down by it. Louise is standing up to it and hiding it desperately; but she couldn't hide it from me. And then, there's Mr. Dunois!"

She paused, clearly visualizing what she had seen in the house above the harbour.

"Louise took me into his room, the biggest room in the house. His bed is placed so that he faces the door, and he is the first thing one sees as one enters. Sam, I never knew what beauty was in a man before! Not just good looks, but real beauty, like Louise's. He has a great wavy mane of pure silver hair, and eyebrows that are still dark, and a face that might have been chiselled out of old marble. Not a wrinkle, Sam; only a little shadow about his eyes. Oh, he looks—he looks tragic. And besides, there's the other look. You can't mistake it—I never can, anyhow, and how often I have seen it! He's dying, Sam; he's dying!

"Louise introduced me. I was standing by his bedside, and he turned his wonderful face towards me and gave me such a gentle, such a courtly little smile, and his long, thin hand took hold of mine to lift it to his lips. On his death-bed, Sam; polite and charming on his death-bed! Isn't it marvellous? I put the room straight for him, and shook up his pillows and opened the window; and as I moved about, I'd glance at him now and again, and never once did he fail to meet me with that polite and flattering little smile. Then I went out and cooked lunch for all of us, and heated some milk for Mr. Dunois."

"H'm!" The vicar knew his wife. "It's very interesting, my dear, and you tell it well. But you won't deny that you've been enjoying yourself."

"I haven't!" retorted Susie, automatically. "At least," she amended, "I like helping people, of course. Who doesn't?"

She rose and came across to him, passed an arm round his neck from behind, and bent to lay her cheek against his.

"You won't mind, will you?" she coaxed. "I'm going there after dinner. He won't have the doctor or the priest or anyone; I don't know why. So they've no one to turn to but me. I mustn't fail them, must I, Sam?"

"I knew what was coming," answered the vicar. "I'm not such a fool as I look. Let my neck go, you little humbug."

Susie kissed him. "Thank you," she murmured. "I knew you'd agree, darling."

AFTER dinner, therefore, she departed, with a bundle of gear for the night; and after a lonely evening the Reverend Samuel went to bed alone. Time enough, he decided, to tell her the tale he had heard from Bates when the business was over. Susie was safe enough anywhere. She had no reputation to lose, except that of one who never denied mercy and aid to any who stood in need of them. And so reflecting, he blew out his candle and fell asleep.

He awoke to the touch of her hand upon his shoulder. The candle had been lighted. He sat up in bed with a jerk. The window showed grey with the twilight that foreruns the dawn.

"What is it?" he demanded.

"Hush!" she said. "Don't make a noise. You're wanted at once, Sam. Put on some clothes and come after me as quickly as ever you can. He suddenly asked for the priest, but the priest is away somewhere. Hurry, Sam!"

The Reverend Samuel was already rising, but now he paused.

"He means a Roman priest," he demurred. "He won't consider me a priest at all. He won't want to see me."

Susie shook her head. "Perhaps not," she said. "We can only try, and there's not much time. Promise you'll hurry, Sam!"

"I *am* hurrying," said the vicar.

With boots unlaced, black trousers and striped pyjama-jacket, and a long black ulster over all, he came to the door of the long cottage above the harbour. In the village below the houses were black hulks in the meagre light; out at sea a beacon winked and exulted; but the windows of the house to which he had come shone as if for a festivity. He paused to recover his breath, then rapped with his knuckles on the door.

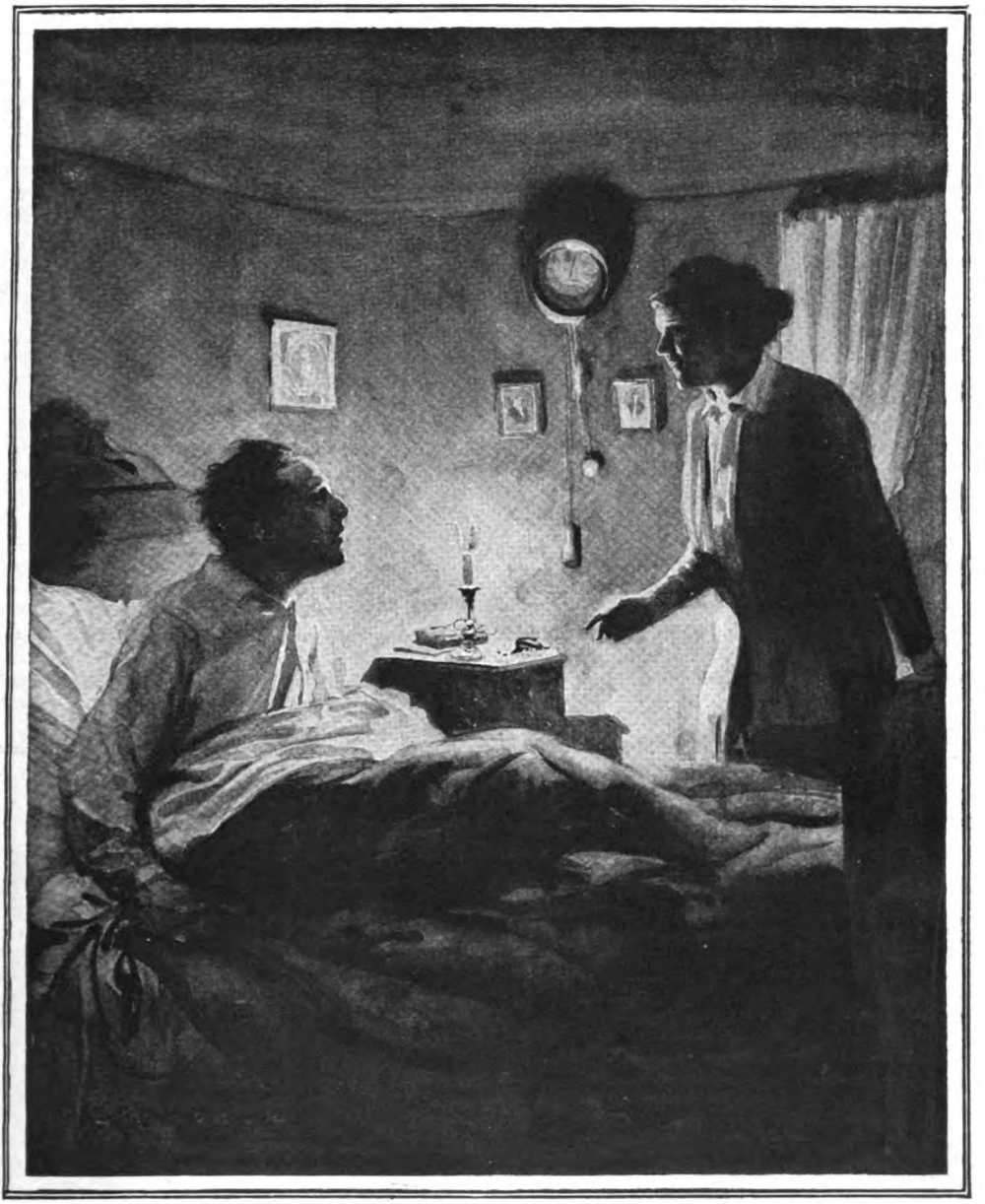
It opened and revealed Susie, plump, fully dressed, with quiet energy patent in every aspect of her.

"You're in time," she said. "He's been told it was you that was coming. Come in, Sam."

She drew him within and closed the door behind him. For a few seconds, ere she led him on, they were alone.

"Don't let him go uncomforted, darling," she begged in an urgent whisper. And then, with a strange flash of vision: "Dying men have only one religion!" She caught at him and suddenly kissed him. "Come, now," she said, and led the way.

The big room in which Felix Dunois lay was ablaze with lights. The vicar did not



"Hush!" she said. "Don't make a noise. Put on some clothes and come after me as quickly as ever you can."

see at first the face upon the pillow, for bending over it was the figure of Louise Davielle, clad in a dressing-gown that shimmered with colours like the skin of a gorgeous snake. On the other side of the bed, gaunt as a mummy, stood the maid, her dark bony face tense and apprehensive. Susie passed him and spoke to Louise Davielle. She rose at once, and the vicar and Felix Dunois beheld each other.

The dying man had the "look" of which Susie had spoken, the look that she could not mistake. But at sight of the clergyman there flickered upon the wasted face a gleam of eagerness. He murmured a word or two, which La Davielle leaned swiftly to catch.

"Come!" she breathed then, and beckoned the Reverend Samuel to the bedside. As he approached she moved away, and the maid also fell back. The three women made a little group in the doorway.

The dying man gasped a word, and his hand crawled over the coverlet as though it sought the hand of the vicar. From the door Susie spoke quietly.

"He wants to confess. Bend your ear down."

The vicar hesitated, but the face on the pillow decided him. He dropped on one knee beside the low bed and put his ear to the uncertain lips.

Falteringly, in gasps, in breaths scarcely articulate, that swelled into harsh whispers and receded to thin ghosts of sound, he heard the last confession of Felix Dunois, the truth, finally, of that ghastly night of fire. He heard it, for it was breathed into his ear; but, because it was in broken mutterings of French, he understood not one word!

It ceased at last; he waited to make sure that it had ended, then rose. For some moments he stood, considering. What could he do? Then, by an inspiration, he raised his hand in the gesture of benediction.

It was at that moment he saw the change. He beckoned swiftly, and the women came forward. Susie took him by the arm.

"I'll let you out," she said. "Come, we must leave them alone for a little."

In the street the dawn was broadening and the east was aglow. They stood together in the gate.

"You couldn't understand anything, of course," said Susie, "and if you had you couldn't tell me anything he'd said. But he did confess, didn't he?"

"I hope so," answered the Reverend Samuel. "I believe so. But I wish he'd had his own priest."

Susie slid her arm through his. "Darling, I'm glad you didn't understand. Now you can forget all this. There was a secret, you know, and an ugly story."

"Bates told me about it," said the vicar.

"Oh, Bates!" snapped Susie. "He talks too much. It was Louise told me. She told me everything."

"Eh?" The vicar turned to her in surprise. "What did she say?"

Susie shook her head. "Sam!" she said, in serious reproach. "How can you ask me to violate a confession?"

She kissed him and sent him back to bed. And Louise Davielle's confession to Susie Hale is inviolate to this day and for ever.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 131.

(The Third of the Series.)

A RATTLING game for those who like a racket.
If you have skill, you're challenged here to back it.

1. Hence, in the middle, we make linen fine.
2. Long before this, we take for Auld Lang Syne.
3. The morse, except one letter, we can read.
4. Not in our time, nor any time, indeed.
5. This cardinal goes just before eleven.
6. 'Tis solved with ease, if once the answer's given.
7. Rule. Conqueror, with an extra, is disclosed.
8. This the stiff-necked have rigidly disposed.
9. Though simple, welcome here we look to find.
10. What's fate to France is to the English kind.

EDI.

Answers to Acrostic No. 131 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on June* 10*th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 130.

(The Second of the Series.)

THE winter of our discontent is past;
The first is here, with promise of the last.

1. 'Tis on the river, therefore should be clean,
Though, judged by sound, discoloured spots are seen.
2. Strange is this liar; half a word we view;
Mix up the letters would you find the hue.
3. Take one of twelve, a butter you will find,
Which, with a rod, a charger brings to mind.
4. The fruit was given, peace to war gave place,
Burnt were the topmost towers by Beauty's face.
5. One letter, then it must be many more;
Nevertheless, it must be letters four.
6. White-feathered one, he wandered manywheres,
Not only up, but also down the stairs.

PAX.

1. S	t a i n e	S
2. P	e c	U
3. R	a	M
4. I	l i a	M
5. N	o t	E
6. G	a n d e	R

NOTES.—Light 1. Staines, stains. 2. Peculiar, puce. 3. One of the signs of the Zodiac; ramrod. 4. The judgment of Paris, leading to the Trojan war; Marlowe's line. 6. Goosey, goosey, gander.

TWENTY-FIFTH SERIES: RESULT.

Five solvers answered all the acrostics quite correctly, and will share the prizes, each one receiving £2 10s. 6d. They will also be debarred from taking a prize in the twenty-sixth series, now running.

The winners are: Forest, Mr. P. E. Herrick, 40, Arodene Road, S.W.2; Mancu, Mr. L. A. Jones, Asterley, Goldsmid Road, Tonbridge, Kent; Skat, Mr. C. S. Crosby, 36, Hills Road, Cambridge; Toby, Miss H. M. Samman, Derbyhaven House, Derbyhaven, Castletown, Isle of Man; Wals, Mr. W. Stradling, 3, Charlbury Road, Oxford.

ELIZABETH'S MUSICIAN

BY

FLORENCE A. KILPATRICK

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBIN

ELIZABETH was singing at her work. This, in itself, was astonishing, for Elizabeth does not regard work as the sort of thing to be sung over. But when she came to me and remarked affably, "Don't you think it would be good ideer if we 'ad a proper clean down next week, 'm?" I was too taken aback to reply.

Even during the unavoidable period of spring-cleaning she is distinctly rebellious. She begins at the attics sullenly and ends up in the cellars in open revolt. Yet here she was launching blithely on the distasteful subject of her own accord and suggesting a clean down in mid-June! Then, as I glanced at her face, I understood. She wears that look of rapturous, ineffable content only when her love affairs are progressing well. And in this softened mood even work seems to become a pleasure to her.

"I gotter reg'ler young man at larst," she now confided to me. "Rupert's 'is name an' 'e's a mewsician."

"What sort of musician?" I asked, doubtfully.

"'E plays the trombone in the local brass band, 'm," she elucidated, her face shining with pride.

"Indeed?" I said, rather absently. I was a little uncertain as to the exact nature of the trombone, so did not commit myself to further comment.

"An' I wonder if you'd mind if 'e comes to see me of an evernin', as 'e's my reg'ler young man," she panted.

"Certainly you may invite him," I said, graciously. I recognized that this was an achievement in Elizabeth's career. It was the first time a young man had gone to the length of desiring to visit her in her own lair. And when Rupert arrived the following evening I felt almost grateful to him for bringing this hour of triumph to Elizabeth.

I had settled down to my writing when a strange sound broke the stillness of the night. It was a dreadful sound, like the long wail of a tortured soul and ten fat men snoring in unison. I sprang to my feet with an exclamation of dismay. Elizabeth's young man was practising the trombone in the kitchen.

The dictionary describes the trombone

as "a deep-toned brass instrument of the trumpet kind," but it is really far worse than that. Perhaps in an orchestra under cover of the noise—I mean the harmony—of the other instruments it might not be so bad. But alone it is, as I have said, dreadful.

For half an hour I listened to the maddening repetition of tumpty-iddle-ti-tump—poum—poum, and then I arose and turned resolute steps towards the kitchen. At any other time I should have refrained from intruding on Elizabeth's domain when she entertained, but I was goaded to exasperation. I opened the door and looked in.

A crescendo of sound greeted me. Elizabeth was seated before Rupert, regarding him with a rapt, almost holy, look upon her face. Rupert was regarding his music, which was propped up by the tea-caddy on the kitchen table, and his veins were swelling visibly.

"Oh, excuse me——" I began.

He paused in full blast and looked at me like a startled ox.

"Excuse my interrupting you," I said, falsely benign, "but I wonder if you'd mind not—er—playing, as I have some writing to do and it is a little disturbing?"

You can see for yourself how nicely I put it. Rupert scrambled to his feet and mumbled an apology. He was a big, bull-necked, red-faced young man, obviously over-developed about the cheeks and chest through an excess of trombone-playing. There was a suggestion of power, of reserve force, about him which gave a sinister hint as to the lengths he would be able to go on the trombone once he launched forth on unbridled effort.

My mission achieved I withdrew from the kitchen to write in peace. But Elizabeth's resentful glance haunted me, and I hoped she would not object to my protest. I was not left long in doubt upon this point. The young man departed shortly afterwards, and Elizabeth presented herself before me with flashing eye and dilating nostril—portents which in her case precede the giving of notice.

"I must say it's 'ard on a girl when she carn't 'ave her reg'ler young man in to see 'er," she began, stormily.

"Have him to see you by all means," I replied, "as long as he doesn't make that awful noise."

Elizabeth tossed her head. "Well, *I* think 'e plays beautiful. I told you 'e was a mewsician. I could listen to 'im orl night."

"I'm sorry, Elizabeth. You'd better tell him that when he comes to see you he must leave his trombone at home."

"But 'e won't be parted from it, 'm. I think it's 'ard, after all the up'ill work I've 'ad gettin' a settled young man, that there should be an objection to 'im seein' me in the evernings. An' if you carn't put up with it, 'm——"

She paused, but I understood. Unless Rupert were allowed to come under my roof with his brass-throated instrument and make the night hideous with blatant discord, Elizabeth meant to give notice. And Elizabeth is an excellent cook. I know of people in the neighbourhood who, for the sake of her perfect rendering of lambs' sweetbreads, her puff pastry, her *sole au gratin*, would endure the trombone with cheerfulness; there were even certain epicures who would have faced a nightly duet of trombones (if such a horror were possible) for the sake of Elizabeth's omelettes alone.

"Very well, Elizabeth," I said, after a pause. "I must try and get my writing done before the evening."

LEST I should be too heartily condemned for this weak capitulation, I must explain that I was writing a serial. This is not the moment to draw aside the veil upon the private life of writers, but I should mention that one needs to be well fed when writing a serial. I have evolved a play (as yet unaccepted) upon soda and milk, a novel upon cereals; but I must have mutton chops and porterhouse steaks between every chapter of a serial. If Elizabeth left me to cater for myself, how could I bring my hero and heroine to a happy end on a diet the *leit motif* of which would be a tin-opener?

"I suppose," I added, as Elizabeth, her point gained, turned to go out of the room, "that your young man won't always want to be practising?"

But here I was wrong. I don't know how, when, or where he conducted his wooing of Elizabeth, for directly he arrived in the evening he began to make preliminary discordant noises on the trombone; ten minutes later he was in full blast; at nine-thirty there was a brief pause to allow him to eat ham sandwiches. At ten o'clock he departed, pausing on the doorstep to blow down his instrument. Obviously there had been no time for any sentimental passages between him and Elizabeth.

Nevertheless, she continued to go on her way rejoicing. Bursts of wild, exultant song broke from her lips as she washed up. She pursued her household tasks with blithesomeness. Yet in spite of all this I resolved to give Elizabeth notice.

It was the water carnival that decided me. Elizabeth had confided to me that the band—of which Rupert was such a powerful unit—was going to play at the forthcoming

"Torkin' to 'is landlady at 'is lodgings."

local sports and water carnival, and he intended to practise diligently for the event.

Now, I am the last one in the world to discourage honest effort; I delight in enthusiasm. But the enthusiasm of a trombone-player can be terrible. As the event of the water carnival drew near Rupert produced such a volume of sound at his nightly practising that I began to fear for the larger veins in his forehead and neck. If any accident were to happen to Rupert through excess of zeal I did not want it to occur in my kitchen. And having now come to the end of my endurance, I called Elizabeth to me and told her she must entertain Rupert without a trombone or take a month's notice.

She chose the month's notice, remarking with dignity that she preferred to lose her place sooner than her young man. "I don't see wot you 'ave against 'is playing, 'm," she added. "I think it's right an' proper for a young man to 'ave an 'obby. Keeps 'im out of the publick-'ouses."

"Trombone-playing is not a hobby," I said, in the bitterness of my spirit; "it's a vice."

The water carnival and local sports took place the following week. Elizabeth, who attended, said the trombone sounded louder than all the rest of the instruments in the band put together. I didn't doubt her for an instant. But in spite of Rupert's triumph I noticed a certain air of dejection about Elizabeth.

"'E ses 'e carn't come in to see me this week at orl," she explained.

After a fortnight had elapsed and Rupert did not appear, Elizabeth announced her intention of tracking him down. She returned from her quest in extreme agitation.

"I bin torkin' to 'is landlady at 'is lodgings," she said, "an' I see it orl now—they wouldn't let 'im play 'is trombone there as they sed it was such an 'orrible noise, an' 'e was wantin' to work up for the water carnival, an'—an'—so——"

"Surely, Elizabeth," I said, faintly, "you don't mean that he came here just to——"

"Exactly, 'm. It was just to get a place to practise in an' nothink else. 'Ound! I wish I 'ad 'im 'ere now. I'd jump on 'is trombone for 'im!"

"I'm very sorry you've been deceived," I said, feelingly, as her lank form drifted towards the door.

"There, 'm, I orter know orl the tricks o' young men by now. But I've learnt my lesson. I'll never keep company with a mewsician again. *It's my belief, 'm, they're a bad lot!*"

Albert Hines Hamilton examining a revolver through the microscope which he has used in one hundred and sixty-eight murder cases.

A GREAT SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE

HOW A FAMOUS EXPERT SOLVES MYSTERIOUS CRIMES

BY

HARRY A. STEWART

IN the winter of 1921 the little town of Saxonville, Massachusetts, was alarmed by a series of burglaries. Apparently all, or nearly all, of them were committed by a single person—someone who seemed to be well acquainted with the village. Among the stolen articles was an automatic pistol, a Savage of ·380 calibre. A police officer was given the job of running down the burglar.

One night, some weeks later, a man named McGrath was on his way home from lodge. It was a dark, lowering winter night, and beyond the circles of radiance cast by street lamps the shadows were deep and dense. As McGrath passed an alley, he suddenly heard the noise of a struggle in a neighbouring yard. Before he could gather his startled senses together, there came the flash and report of a firearm. He saw, dimly, a man stagger and fall to the ground, while the figure of another man darted round a corner of the house and disappeared.

McGrath leaped the fence and ran to the scene of the struggle. On the ground he found the lifeless body of the police officer. From the open window in the house, and the loot scattered on the ground, it was easy to deduce that the officer had surprised the burglar as he was leaving the residence, and had been killed while attempting to make an arrest. Beyond the fact that the burglar was a man, McGrath was unable to give any sort of description that would help to identify the murderer.

During the encounter, in his effort to break away from the policeman, the burglar had bitten the officer in the wrist, leaving a clear imprint of the teeth of both the upper and lower jaw. At the autopsy a local gun expert examined the fatal bullet, and stated that it had been fired from a Savage ·380 automatic pistol.

A few days later a pawnbroker came to the police-station with a pistol. It, also, was a ·380. He said that this pistol, together with other articles, which were recognized as having been stolen from the

looted houses, had been sold to him that day by a local character named Sam Letteri, an Italian, who had not been in America long enough to learn much of the language. Sam was promptly arrested, and in the course of time was brought to trial charged with the murder of the officer.

THE prosecution connected him with the crime on three major counts: First, the officer had been shot with a Savage ·380 pistol, and Sam, it was alleged, had been in possession of such a weapon; second, a plaster cast was made of Sam's mouth, and a dentist stated that the imprints on the officer's wrist corresponded exactly with Sam's teeth; third, in one of the burglarized houses a mahogany cabinet had been forced open with a screw-driver, and the police had found a screw-driver in Sam's house which, they said, exactly fitted the dents in the cabinet.

This evidence, taken in conjunction with Sam's inability to prove an *alibi*, made the authorities expect a speedy conviction.

Sam had no money with which to employ counsel, so the court appointed a lawyer for him. This attorney was a young fellow who had only recently been admitted to the Bar. He had a talk with his client, but couldn't get much out of him that might disprove the charge. Even under normal conditions, Sam was not a very articulate soul. About all he could do now was to shake his head and say:—

"I no shoota heem! I no keela da mon!"

But there was something in his eyes that impressed the young lawyer.

"By Jove!" he said to himself, "I believe this fellow is innocent!"

The evidence in the case was purely circumstantial. The only eye-witness, McGrath, could add nothing to the case beyond the fact that there had been a murder. From the testimony of inanimate objects a story must be constructed that would either send Sam to the electric chair or out into the street a free man.

"I'll ask *Hamilton* to help me," declared the lawyer. "There isn't any money in it, but maybe he'll do it for love!"

On the day of the trial Albert Hines Hamilton was in the court-room. I will tell you a little later more about the man himself. Just now I want you to see him in action, and to understand him for what he is—a specialist in circumstantial evidence.

The prosecution presented the following exhibits to the jury:—

The fatal bullet, and another one which had been fired through the pistol Sam had pawned.

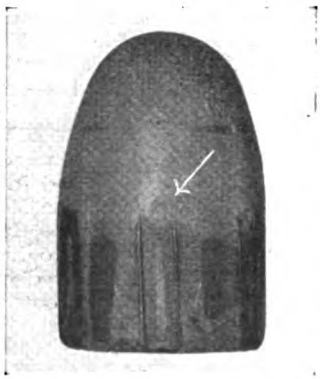
The photograph of the tooth marks on the officer's arm and a plaster cast of Sam's teeth.

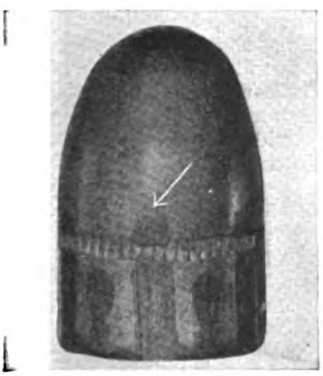
A mahogany cabinet, with a forced door, and a screw-driver that had been found in Sam's house and which he admitted belonged to him.

On the other side were Sam, his attorney, and Hamilton with his compound microscope.

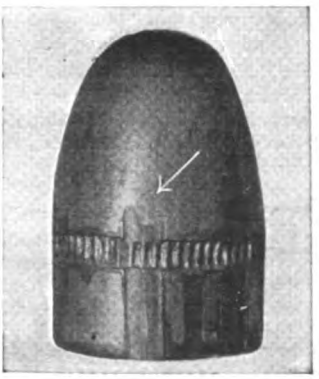
The experts for the State testified. A gun expert examined the two bullets and said they had been fired from the same gun. He held them side by side so the jury could see that in size and marking they appeared to be identical.

The dental expert said that the teeth from which the plaster cast was modelled were the ones that had bitten the officer; and he explained how he reached





The bullet in the centre killed a man. Those to the right and left were test shots fired through the suspect's pistol. These photo-micrographs, made by Hamilton, show that there are slight, but distinct, differences between the rifling marks shown on the centre bullet and those on the two other bullets.



this conclusion. A member of the police department demonstrated to the jury that, so far as the eye could see, the screw-driver fitted the dents perfectly.

Then the State rested its case, and Hamilton went to work.

FIRST, he placed under his microscope the bullet that had killed the officer. Then he showed the foreman of the jury how an object under the microscope could be measured, or any part of it, to the hundred-thousandth of an inch. Next, Hamilton asked him to measure the width of "landmarks" in the fatal bullet. These are the marks made by the ridges and grooves of the rifling inside a pistol or gun-barrel. The foreman, after studying them through the microscope, stated that they were exactly nine hundredths of an inch wide. In turn, each member of the jury examined the bullet under the microscope and confirmed this measurement.

Then Hamilton put the *test* bullet under the microscope; the one which had been fired, for purposes of evidence, from *Sam's* revolver. The foreman measured the width of *its* landmarks—and they were *eleven hundredths* of an inch wide! This clearly demonstrated that the fatal bullet had not been fired from the gun that Sam had pawned. (See photographs on previous page.)

Hamilton then measured the width of the blade of the screw-driver. It was thirty-two hundredths of an inch wide. The dents in the cabinet were subjected to the same scrutiny, and were found to be only twenty-nine hundredths of an inch in width. Sam's screw-driver was bigger than the holes it was said to have made! It is obviously impossible for a screw-driver to make a dent in a board smaller than its width when the blade is used as a pry. That put the screw-driver out of court.

Then came the question of the teeth. For this, Hamilton dispensed with the microscope. He tore the transparent paper out of a "window envelope" he had in his pocket, and on it made a tracing of the tooth marks as they had appeared on the officer's wrist. He laid this tracing over the cast of Sam's teeth and invited the jury to *look through it.*

THE assassin's dental structure, as shown by the tracing, was angular, the teeth slanting from front to back at a sharp angle. Sam's teeth, as shown by the plaster cast, made a regular curve. *At no point did the two coincide!*

The jury acquitted Sam without even leaving the court-room.

When Hamilton had told me about this case I said to him, "You must feel a great satisfaction at having prevented a miscarriage of justice."

"I do," he answered. "But don't get the idea that Sam's case was improperly conducted in any way. The State was justified in bringing him to trial. But it sometimes happens that in court, as well as elsewhere, people don't really get to the bottom of things. They don't carry investigation to the limit. They *stop looking* too soon.

"To the naked eye those bullets looked exactly alike. I could hardly tell the difference myself, and I have a trained eye. But they shouldn't have been looked at with the naked eye at all! That was a case for the microscope.

"And the bites were studied the wrong way. The photograph of the marks on the officer's arm was on opaque paper. The only way to compare it with the cast was by placing one on the other, and then *guessing* whether they coincided. With a *transparent tracing*, so that both the marks and the teeth could be seen at *the same time*, it was easy to see how unlike they were.

"My whole business," said Hamilton, tersely, "is just the scientific application of common horse sense!"

He might have added that it included a limitless patience. In one of his cases he studied a single signature for *three years!*

HAMILTON has the investigator's turn of mind; and apparently he has always had it. He is the apotheosis of the man from Missouri. He takes nothing for granted. It must be demonstrated not merely to his own satisfaction, which for his trained mind would be comparatively simple, but so that the *untrained* mind of the average juryman can be convinced.

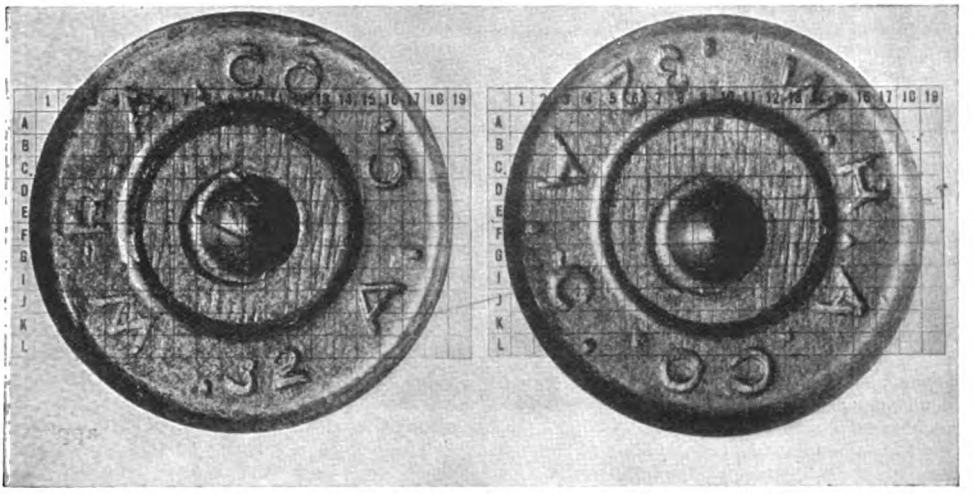
That Hamilton has always demanded to be shown is illustrated by something he told me that happened when he was nine years old. At that time his father had an old muzzle-loading shot-gun. One day Albert heard a farm-hand say that you could shoot a candle through a pine board. This idea offended his nine-year-old intelligence, for he could not conceive how a soft tallow candle could penetrate the hard board.

Still, he was willing to be convinced So he took the paternal shot-gun, a charge of black powder, and a candle, and went out to the barn. He measured out a liberal load, for he wanted to give the candle a fair chance. Then he took aim at an inch-thick board and pulled the trigger.

The kick of the heavily-loaded firearm

knocked the youngster flat, making his nose bleed and his head ache. It was a minute or two before he could remember what had preceded the catastrophe. Then, recollecting, he jumped up and ran to the board. There was a hole in it all right. Moreover, tallow was smeared all around it. And, as further proof that the candle was responsible for the hole, the wick was dangling in it, half on one side and half on the other. The candle had gone through triumphantly!

That test made one profound change in his character. Before the shot was fired he had seriously doubted that the candle could get through. Now he doubts nothing—believes nothing.



The exploded cartridge on the left (this picture is greatly magnified) was fired in a murder; that on the right was fired, as a test, from the pistol found on the accused man. The fine irregular lines on the caps are file marks on the pistol's breech-block as impressed on the caps by the force of the explosion. By checking the numbered and lettered squares of one photograph against those of the other Hamilton proved that the suspect's pistol was not the one used.

UNTIL he was well along in his teens, Hamilton's life was that of every other farm boy. When he was fifteen he went to work in his brother's grocery store in Albany, New York. Something happened while he was there that definitely determined the whole course of his life. His brother bought him a second-hand microscope for a gift, thinking that it might interest the lad. It did! It opened a new world for him—the realm of the infinitely little. To-day he is the unquestioned sovereign of that kingdom when it gets into court. He has testified as an expert witness in one hundred and sixty-eight homicide cases alone, and in thousands of cases of lesser importance.

At twenty-two he decided he wanted to be a druggist. So he entered the College of Pharmacy of the College of the City of New York, and was graduated at twenty-five. Then he went to Auburn, New York, where he now lives, and got a job in a drug store.

During all this time he kept on working with his microscope. His ambition then was to have a drug store of his own some day. He never dreamed that he would create his present strange and interesting profession. That came later, in a very curious way.

There were two women in the town who, although they were neighbours, couldn't get along together. One of them kept chickens; but the chickens died suddenly—also suspiciously. The owner insisted on an investigation and the prosecuting attorney looked into the case. Then he went to see young Hamilton.

"Albert," he said, "here's a chicken's crop. I know you're pretty handy with your microscope. I wish you'd tell me, if you can, whether this chicken died of poison; and, if so, what kind."

Hamilton examined the crop and its contents, and made a chemical analysis.

"There is no poison in the crop," he reported.

"Well, I'm glad to hear they died a natural death," said the relieved official.

"I didn't say that," interrupted Hamilton. "I said there was no poison *in the crop*. But they were poisoned all the same!"

"How could they be poisoned without poison?" gasped the mystified attorney.

"Salt," said Hamilton, tersely. "Salt mixed with corn meal. It's good for folks—but it's poison to chickens."

He got quite a little local reputation out of that case, and soon afterwards a man who had a suit against a city asked him to investigate the water supply. Hamilton did, with the result that the city settled out of court.

Then, along in the early 'nineties, came the famous Sheldon murder case, that was to make Hamilton famous as a criminal investigator.

SHELDON was a well-to-do farmer in northern New York. One morning, one of his sons, who was ploughing in a field not far from the house, heard a sound like a shot. A few minutes later he saw his father come out, hitch up a buggy, and drive off. The boy continued his ploughing for a while, then went to the house, where he found his mother's body on the floor. A shot through the brain had killed her.

Sheldon, who was arrested on a charge of murder, declared that his wife had committed suicide. By careful comparison of the effect of gunshot wounds at varying distances, and aided by an ingenious contrivance of his own invention, Hamilton was able to show that it would have been *impossible* for the woman to have fired the shot. Sheldon was convicted; and before his execution he confessed that he had carefully staged the crime to simulate suicide.

It was in this case that Hamilton evolved the definition of the "contact shot" that is now standard all over the world. Whenever the effect of a gunshot is studied, to learn whether or not the weapon was in actual contact with the victim, Hamilton's method is followed. Although interesting, it is too technical for explanation in a short article.

Following the Sheldon case Hamilton gave most of his time to his new profession. He had saved up money enough to purchase the drug store where he had worked in Auburn; but he now hired a man to take his place while he was away working on his cases.

TWO years after the Sheldon murder the little town of Sackett's Harbour, on the shore of Lake Ontario, in northern New York, was the scene of a double murder.

At about two o'clock one summer night, a team of horses attached to a buggy dashed into town, clattered down the street, and came to a stop in front of the livery stable. There was no driver.

The night man, when he ran out to take the horses, was horrified to see the body of a woman hanging, head down, over the side of the vehicle, with her knees caught under the seat. In the bottom of the buggy, jammed in between the seat and the dashboard, was the body of a second woman. Both had been shot to death.

The liveryman got the sheriff, and in a short time the whole town was buzzing with excitement. The women were well known. One was a cook in the household of an officer stationed at the barracks on the outskirts of the town. The other, the younger of the two, was maid in another officer's household. The maid was unmarried. The cook had a husband but did not live with him. He occupied a shack by the side of the road out beyond the military reservation.

While speculation was still rife as to the identity of the murderer and the motive for the killing, a telephone message came from the barracks. At four o'clock a soldier had crawled in on his hands and knees, bleeding from three pistol wounds and cuts on his head. He was dripping wet.

According to his story, he had asked the younger of the two women to go riding with him, and she had said she would if the other woman, the cook, was invited. The cook consented to go, the soldier hired the buggy at the livery stable, and the three drove about the country roads until after midnight.

They were returning to town, the soldier said, and had just passed the shack inhabitated by the cook's husband. The horses were going at a walk, when suddenly the figure of a man leaped out of the darkness and seized the bridle rein of the near horse.

Without speaking a word he began firing a revolver at the occupants of the buggy. One of the first shots fired, the soldier said, struck him, but nevertheless he saw by the light of the pistol flashes that the assailant was the cook's husband. After his gun was empty the assassin came back to the buggy and clubbed the soldier into unconsciousness with the butt of his weapon.

When he again came to himself the soldier said he found himself struggling in shallow water. He managed to get ashore and discovered he was on the bank of the lake not far from the barracks. With great difficulty he made his way there. That was all he knew.

As soon as he got the particulars by telephone from the fort, the sheriff and a couple of deputies went out to the shack where the cook's husband lived. It was now almost daylight. They found the man in bed and had to rouse him from an apparently sound slumber. At first he seemed unable to understand their errand; but when it was made clear to him, he indignantly denied that he had anything to do with the killing.

The sheriff, however, found the man's trousers hanging over a chair—and there were fresh bloodstains on them! A basin of bloody water was on a bench near the door, and near it was a cake of soap with blood on it. The man accounted for this by saying that he had killed a chicken that day and had got some of the blood on his hands and clothing. The sheriff treated this explanation with the contempt he thought it deserved.

There had been rain in the afternoon, and under the man's bed the sheriff found a pair of shoes covered with fresh mud, similar to that in the road. The man was arrested and imprisoned. Public opinion was so strong against him that there was talk of a lynching.

One of the most convincing pieces of evidence against the man was the fact that he had been heard to say repeatedly that if he ever caught his wife running around with the soldiers from the barracks he would shoot her.

The apparatus on the girl's head is a device invented by Hamilton for determining the greatest distance a pistol can be held from the head and fired by the trigger finger. In one case a man claimed that his wife killed herself. Hamilton was able to show, by this device, that the shot came from a greater distance than the woman could reach. Her husband was convicted.

HAMILTON, who happened to be in the neighbourhood on another matter, heard of the case. It roused his interest; for the evidence, he said, was *too clear to be convincing.* The prosecuting attorney invited him to look over the exhibits. Hamilton did so, and then asked the prosecutor where the fatal shots had struck the victims.

"In the neck—both of them."

"Which way did the bullets enter?"

"Why," the prosecuting attorney said, "from the front, of course. That's where they were fired from."

But Hamilton wasn't satisfied. So he had the bodies exhumed, and found that the women had been shot in the neck all right —*but that the bullets had entered from the rear!*

Then he examined the soldier's wounds and the clothing he had worn that night. One bullet had passed upward across his body, through the lapel of his coat, and made a slight wound in his chin. Another had entered the side of the neck and ranged upward. The third had struck him on the jawbone, just below the temple, followed the bone downward, and lodged in his chin. Two bullets had been removed. *One was of ·22 calibre, the other was* ·32—yet the soldier had said nothing about the assailant's using more than one gun.

Hamilton next examined the buggy, which had been unused since the crime. In the bottom of it he found several burned matches and two or three exploded shells. They were of ·32 calibre. He learned that the side curtains had been down the night of the drive. He examined them, and found there were no holes in them, nor in the back curtain.

The fringe on the front of the cushion was scorched and singed. And on the cook's body he found a burn, nearly a foot long and three inches wide, across the chest. Her clothing showed a similar burned area.

In addition to two bullet wounds at the base of the skull, the cook had a powder-burned area on her cheek, where a revolver had been fired close to her face without the bullet touching her skin. Hamilton worked out the diameter of the explosion, and from this was able to show the distance from which the shot was fired and the direction from which it had come.

It had been fired less than a foot from her face, and *from her right as she sat in the buggy.* The soldier, being the driver, sat on the right side of the seat. The maid sat in the middle, and the cook on the left side. The shot, then, had come from where the soldier sat in the buggy.

HAMILTON now suggested that the soldier be arrested. This caused considerable derision.

"He didn't do it!" they said. "Why, the poor man was nearly dead himself!"

The prosecuting attorney, however, knew something about Hamilton and his methods, and the soldier was put in jail.

A new witness now appeared. A woman who lived on a farm up a side road, in the opposite direction from town and a mile and a half from where the shooting was said to have taken place, came forward, and said that on the night in question she had heard a young woman crying out, "Oh, don't, George!" And after that she heard shots.

Hamilton went to the scene of the crime. In the road he was able to identify the track of the team because of a peculiar shoe worn by one of the horses. The mud had hardened after the wet spell and retained the marks. On one side of the road was a low, damp place covered with high, thick grass, and separated from the road by a rail fence. On the top rail he found bloodstains. Inside the fence, in the grass, he found the footprints of a man and a woman going towards the centre of the field. Then they stopped, *and the man's footprints returned alone to the fence.* They were deeper than the similar prints going into the field. The inference was obvious. *He had carried a heavy burden coming back.*

Farther up the main road, in the grass by the side of the wagon track, a farmer found a small pistol, badly rusted from exposure. It was identified as the property of the *cook*, and it was known that she had carried it after her husband had threatened her. *It was of ·22 calibre.*

Hamilton now asked to be shown the place where the soldier said he had crawled out of the lake. It was a lonely stretch of beach. He found that the buggy had been driven into the water and out again; and that, soon after coming out, the horses had suddenly broken into a gallop. He was now ready to say what had actually happened on the night of the murder.

The soldier was a married man but did not live with his wife. The maid was a devout Catholic. He had been paying her attentions, and had repeatedly asked her to go away with him, but she had refused. On this night he had renewed his request, which had been vigorously opposed by the cook. There had been a quarrel, which reached fever heat, and the soldier allowed his furious anger to take possession of him. He drew a revolver, reached round the back of the seat, and shot the cook in the back of the neck.

Severely wounded though she was, the woman managed to get out her own little weapon, and returned the fire, inflicting two comparatively slight wounds on the soldier. Then she was killed by a shot which penetrated her brain.

NOW completely maddened, the soldier turned the team, drove back until he reached the side road, and turned into it. He probably threatened the younger girl with the same fate as the cook's if she made any noise. When they had reached the rail fence he stopped the team. Suddenly realizing that she had been the only witness of the cook's murder and that he intended to kill her too, she leaped out of the buggy and fled over the fence with the soldier after her. He caught her in the middle of the field and shot her. Then he carried her body back to the buggy.

Up to this time his actions had been entirely unreasoning. He had killed the first woman in a fit of anger; the second crime was to cover up the first. Now he was confronted with the necessity for disposing of the bodies.

For some time he drove about aimlessly. He had nothing to dig with, and no plan for concealing his victims came to him. As his excitement lessened and the inevitable reaction came on, he grew more and more despairing. At one time he stopped the horses and lighted matches to see whether the women were actually dead. In doing this he unwittingly set fire to the cook's clothing and it gained some headway before he discovered it. In putting it out he slightly burned his fingers. Hamilton found the traces of these burns afterwards.

The murderer finally decided to throw the bodies into the lake; but when he reached the lake shore he began to fear that the bodies would be discovered. It was known that he was with the women, and as soon as the bodies were found suspicion would be directed to him. As he drove out of the water back on to the beach, he suddenly gave way completely to despair and decided that he might as well end the job by his own suicide. So he reloaded the pistol and got out of the buggy.

Standing beside the vehicle, he placed his revolver to his temple and pulled the trigger. At the sound of the shot, the team, already restive and uneasy, dashed off and ran back to the stable from which they had been hired.

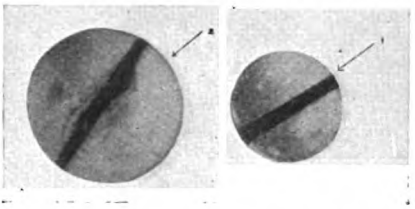
But the soldier's aim, which had been so deadly for others, was defective in his own case. He shot too low; and the bullet, instead of piercing his brain, ranged down the jaw-bone and stopped in his chin.

The remainder of his story was true. He did recover consciousness in the water, and,

after great effort, made his way back to the barracks. The yarn that he told on arriving there was one he had concocted on his way.

He admitted, after the other man had been freed and after his own conviction, that the story Hamilton had reconstructed from circumstantial evidence was true in every detail.

A murder case hinged on the question of whether or not the hammer of this revolver had been removed and replaced. Through his microscope Hamilton photographed the screw holding it, and found that it had not been touched by a screw-driver since it left the factory. The hammer had never been removed. Another screw in the weapon had been, at some time, taken out. The enlargements below show clearly the condition of the screws.



ONE of Hamilton's most interesting experiences grew out of an assassination in a little town in Colorado where he had been called to work on a handwriting case. A short time before his arrival this murder had set the community in an uproar. One night a banker, one of the most esteemed men in the locality, was at supper with his wife. Behind him, as he sat facing his wife at the table, was a window, but the blind was not drawn.

Suddenly the woman heard a muffled report, and, with a single groan, her husband toppled over on the table, dead. At the same time she felt a stinging sensation in her cheek. When she put her hand on the spot it came away covered with blood. With rare presence of mind she flew to the telephone, called the family doctor, and asked him to notify the sheriff. Within a few moments the two men arrived.

So far as the husband was concerned, the doctor instantly pronounced him beyond aid. Then he noticed that the woman was wounded, and from her cheek he extracted a bit of twisted metal.

In the meantime the sheriff had not been idle. He examined the neat little hole that had been drilled through the window pane, and the wound in the dead man's body. He noticed that fragments of plaster had fallen from the wall, and a search disclosed another piece of bent metal, similar to the one that had hurt the woman. He compared the two fragments and stated that, beyond a doubt, they were parts of the "jacket," or hard metal case, in which the bullet of a high-power rifle is enclosed.

The sheriff was familiar with firearms of every kind. Therefore, when he had measured, roughly, the hole in the window pane, and observed the wound, he unhesitatingly declared that the bullet had been fired from a rifle of ·25 calibre. But there are a number of variations of the ·25 calibre, as every sportsman knows. There is, first, the little ·25 automatic pistol; then comes the 25·20 rifle, the 25·35, and finally the 250-3000. But, he said, the metal jacket was made of *copper*. That completely identified the rifle. Only the 250-3000 has a copper-jacketed bullet. All the others are steel.

The town was humming with the news of the crime by the next day. Everyone knew the sheriff's opinion as to the nature of the weapon with which the banker had been murdered.

The next morning a local hardware dealer informed the sheriff that only a few days before he had sold a 250-3000 rifle, several boxes of ammunition, *and a Maxim silencer*.

"Who bought it?" asked the sheriff.

"The banker's youngest son!"

This boy, for he was hardly more than that, was married and lived on a ranch near by. Upon being notified of his father's death the previous night, he had come into town. Later he had gone back home.

The sheriff, after his interview with the hardware man, rode out to the boy's house; but the lad denied that he had ever purchased such a weapon, or even seen one. But the sheriff, of course, took him back to town and to the hardware store. When he was

confronted with the record of the sale, and with *his own cancelled cheque with which the firearm had been purchased*, he broke down and admitted that he had the gun.

Leaving him in custody, the sheriff returned to the ranch, where he found the rifle. It had been "taken down." The barrel was hidden between the board lining of the granary and the wall. The silencer was buried in the manure pile, and the stock was in the hay-loft. This looked pretty bad. Still the lad persisted in his denial of the crime.

"What made you hide that gun, then?" asked the sheriff, and all his unhappy prisoner could say was that he didn't know.

The boy was refused bail and was imprisoned to await trial. Feeling was bitter against him, and, although there was no other evidence available in the case, no doubt a jury drawn from the country, where everyone knew and liked his father, would have convicted him.

At this point the young man's attorney asked Hamilton to look into the case. The sheriff told the expert what he had observed at the scene of the crime; and with this meagre material to work on, Hamilton returned to his laboratory at Auburn.

First he purchased a new 250-3000 rifle. Then he set up a dummy figure behind a pane of glass and fired at it from various angles. But at the first shot he knew that the banker had never been killed with a gun of that type!

"I WANT you to keep the character of this gun firmly fixed in your mind," Hamilton told me. "It is a rifle of small calibre which fires a bullet at great velocity. When the projectile leaves the muzzle of the gun it is travelling at the rate of three thousand feet per second!

"You probably remember," he said with a smile, "how, in your school days, you used to speculate on what would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable body. Well, that's about what happens when the 250-3000 bullet strikes an object. Both the bullet and the target are, to a certain extent, destroyed. The bullet is travelling so swiftly that it can't stop; it explodes. And the substance of which the *target* is composed can't separate and allow the bullet to pass through, so *it* explodes too! At least, the area around the point where the bullet strikes is utterly destroyed.

"When I fired at a dummy figure behind a pane of glass, what happened? *The glass just vanished out of existence and the dummy was untouched!* There was no neat little hole, such as was found in the banker's window. There was a huge gaping aperture a foot or more in diameter! The rest of the pane was covered with a fine network of radiating cracks that looked like frost.

"I tried something else. I hung an ordinary rubber hot-water bottle full of water against a board and fired at it. After I pulled the trigger I had to rub my eyes to convince myself they were not playing me tricks. *The hot-water bottle was gone!* And, so far from showing a bullet mark, *the board wasn't even wet!* The water had gone the same place the bottle did, wherever that was.

"This left only one possible way in which the son's rifle might have been used to kill his father. It might have been fired with a reduced charge. I discounted this, because I doubted whether the boy possessed the necessary tools to load a cartridge with a reduced charge. Nevertheless, it *was* possible.

"I went back to Colorado and asked the sheriff for the bits of metal he had taken from the woman's cheek and from the wall. After considerable demur, the court permitted the sheriff to turn them over to me. I analyzed them, and made a discovery.

"The metal was oxidized, so that it *looked* like copper, but it wasn't. It was *chrome nickel steel.*

"At the trial I repeated my experiments for the benefit of the jury. Then, at their request, a calf was brought into a field near the court-house and I shot it with the boy's gun. Where the bullet went in there was a hole nearly an inch in diameter. Where it came out you could have put your fists in and have had room for something more.

"As the whole case against the boy turned on his possession of a weapon with which the crime might have been committed, and as my observations showed conclusively that it could *not* have been committed with that weapon, the charge was dismissed. The real assassin was never caught."

This case shows what a dangerous thing faulty observation may be, and, incidentally, how guiltily an innocent man may act if he is surprised with the accusation that he has committed a serious crime.

HAMILTON is acknowledged to be an expert in many lines. He is a chemist, biologist, and an expert in poisons. He is a finger-print expert and a handwriting expert.

He is prosperous, but far from being wealthy. His interest in the profession he has created has led him to consider the *case*, instead of thinking of what he could get out of it.

For his first case he got a fee of five dollars. The biggest fee he ever got was seven thousand dollars, but he worked on that case for *three years.*

The MENDLEAN APOLLO

by

PHIL FORSYTH

ILLUSTRATED BY
J DEWAR MILLS

THERE was no one at the little wayside station to recognize Lord Leath when he stepped from the London train. And this unusual feeling of incognito deepened within him the sense of adventure which had been steadily growing since his departure from town. Distinguished savant and explorer, celebrated almost equally for his marvellous discoveries in Athens and his extraordinary height, his was a familiar and respected figure in every capital of Europe.

But here the solitary porter, summoned imperiously from his lair, answered the stranger's questions with reluctance and eyed him with disdain.

"Whiteladies? First to the right, and then ask."

"How far is it?" Leath demanded.

"Oh, a goodish step."

"Well, then, is there any method of conveyance? Can one get a car?"

The porter scratched his ear.

"Might try the Manor," he said at last.

Lord Leath, passing out into the one street of the village, located the Manor Inn, and secured the promise of a fly. After an impatient wait

he found himself seated within a frowzy vehicle, proceeding at a jog-trot along interminable country lanes. The autumn day was fading into dusk, and, as he gazed drearily at the hedgerows on either side, he wondered whether his sense of duty to his cousin's widow had really necessitated this sudden visit, unannounced. Probably a letter, carefully explanatory, would have served his purpose as well. What was she like, he wondered, Jim's widow, whom he had never seen ?

His thoughts reverted to Jim. It was three years now since his death ; six years since his strange, unaccountable marriage with a woman not of his class—daughter of a village postmaster, or some such thing. But Jim had always been peculiar, always held mad views. And, having married the girl, he had stuck to her, burying himself with her in this desolate country place, ignoring his family, and by them ignored.

Yet Jim had seemed content. Leath had seen him once or twice since his marriage, when infrequent business brought him, unaccompanied by his wife, to town. The last time, he remembered, was at old Stephen Greyling's funeral. He recalled Jim's frank, open face, the skin tanned and glowing with fresh air and health, and the tones of his voice when he said :—

" Everyone has to work out his own happiness, and you can take it from me that I've found mine. You'll none of you ever see Polly—it wouldn't be fair to you, and it wouldn't be fair to her—but the loss is yours."

But was Jim content ? Or was he deliberately making the best of things ? The family continued to visualize his wife as a broad-bosomed harridan, strident-voiced.

THE fly crawled to a stop, and Leath, awakening from his reverie, looked out on a straggling, irregular building, half cottage and half farm-house. From a curtained window, to the left of the door, light shone.

" Whiteladies," said the driver.

" Can you," Leath asked, as he paid him, " call for me in an hour's time ? "

The driver grunted, seemingly in assent. The fly ambled off into the shadows. And Leath, walking up the little flagged path, rang a tinkling bell. Almost instantly the door was opened. A trim maid-servant, wearing no cap, but a tiny apron befrilled with lace, stood silhouetted against the light. She looked, he thought, almost like a servant on the stage. He raised his hat.

" Is Mrs. Beaumont in ? " he asked.

" I'm Mrs. Beaumont," she said.

" Oh ! " said Leath, considerably surprised. After a short pause, conscious of futility, he added, " Ah ! "

" Won't you come in ? " she asked.

He followed her into a long, low room, bright with firelight. His keen eye, glancing round, noted every detail, and approved. Jim's taste, of course, that Aubusson carpet, and those Sheraton chairs set against a pale green paper. But Jim had been dead three years. Other hands than his were responsible for the cleanliness of it all, the beautiful dull polish, bringing out the graining of the wood, the scent of pot-pourri that hung softly on the air.

" It does get dark early, doesn't it ? " said Mrs. Jim. " I'll light the lamp."

He saw now that she was less young than he had thought, probably twenty-eight or thirty ; a woman of medium height, with a rounded figure, and pretty, irregular features, illumed by a pair of soft brown eyes. It seemed to him strange that she had betrayed no curiosity as to the reason of his visit ; and, with a little cough,

" I am a kinsman of your late husband," he said. " My name is Leath."

" Oh ! " she said, smiling in quick friendliness, " you must be Charles ! "

There was a moment's silence, and then an answering smile broke over Leath's face.

" Yes," he replied, " I'm Charles."

" Jim so often spoke of you," she said. " I'm Polly."

" I have called," Leath began, " on a matter of some importance connected with his estate. We have reason to suspect——" Her little gesture interrupted him.

" Perhaps you could tell me later on," she suggested. " I'm just getting the tea, and the kettle must be boiling. It doesn't do to let the water boil twice."

She hurried away, and Leath, left alone, strolled aimlessly over to the tea-table, which stood, lace-hung, beside the fire. Then, with a start, he leaned forward, scrutinizing the cup which stood on the tray. He picked it up and turned it reverently in his hands.

" It spoils the tea, you know," Polly explained, arriving with the teapot and a second cup and saucer. She took off her ridiculous play-acting apron, folded it, and put it neatly away in a drawer. Now, in her little grey frock, seated behind the tea-table, she was again the competent hostess. " Tea is ready, Charles." But still Leath held the cup, and still he stared.

" Are you aware," he said at last, " that this is Sèvres ? "

" It's a very old service," she told him. " It belonged to one of the kings of France."

" But, good God ! " he expostulated. " It's genuine Rose Dubarry ! It's practically priceless. It ought to be in a museum."

" Ah, you're like Jim," Polly said. " Do you take sugar, Charles ? Jim kept everything in cabinets. But he always told me that when he was gone I could do as I liked. You see," she explained, " what I say is this : these things were made to be used, and it's pretty dull for them, poor dears, to be put away behind glass. I reckon they like to feel they're doing their job, in a nice warm room, with people talking, all friendly. Now, the teapot"—her pretty fingers caressed its sides—" I always call him Marcus. Well, if he was in a museum he'd only have a number, the same as if he was in prison."

" Your point of view," said Leath, dryly, " is certainly original."

" And then, of course, I always wash them myself. They won't come to any harm through being used by me."

" Ah ! " he murmured, considerably relieved. " I'm glad you don't trust them to the servants."

" I haven't any servants," Polly said.

" Indeed ? I'm sorry—I didn't know." He was rather aghast. Jim had never been wealthy, but he had possessed a certain competence. It seemed pathetic that his widow should be left in straitened circumstances. A good fellow, Jim. He thought of his own vast London house, of the retinue of servants that attended to his bachelor needs, and wondered if the family would support him in making her an allowance. Paid impersonally, through a solicitor, it could be offered and accepted without embarrassment.

" How did Jim lose his money ? " he asked. " He wasn't the man to speculate."

" He didn't lose it," she told him. " I've got what we always had—about three thousand a year."

Rose Dubarry trembled perilously, on the verge of disaster. Cautiously Leath replaced his cup on the tray and pushed back his chair, facing his hostess with amazed eyes.

" Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, " that with three thousand a year you do your own housework ? "

" Why not ? " she said.

" But it's preposterous ! It's ridiculous ! "

" Why ? " she said again. " I must have something to do. I can't knit all day long. I'm not a lady, and if I got a lot of servants and pretended to be one, I reckon I should lose the friends I've got, and the other people wouldn't know me, anyway."

" Extraordinary ! " Leath muttered to himself. Yet he could not deny that there was reason in what she said. " Do you mind if I smoke ? " he asked. " And now I must explain that I called about——"

" I suppose you couldn't keep it for a little while ? " Polly asked, rather plaintively. " There's the washing-up to do, and I hate to have dirty things about."

But Leath was firm. " Unfortunately, no. I told the man to call back for me in an hour. I have to return to town."

" Did you get him from the Manor ? " Polly wanted to know. " An old man with a grey beard ? Ah, that's old Baird, and he won't come out here again to-night. It's wood-carving class on Thursdays, and he never misses that."

" In that case," Leath said, grimly, " you may as well do your washing-up. May I—er—carry the tray for you ? "

" No," she said, shaking her head decisively. " There's a step down into the kitchen and you might fall. But you can carry Marcus, if you like, only be very careful."

AND after all she could not trust him, but came hurrying back from the kitchen to take the teapot from his hands. Nor would she allow him to assist her in the washing-up. " I reckon you're not used to it," she said. " You might break something, and then you'd feel bad." So he stood, awkwardly enough, his hands in his pockets, and watched her, enveloped in a huge apron, moving about her white-tiled kitchen like some priestess of old engaged in a mystic rite. But soon it was finished, and he followed her to the sitting-room, watching still, as she took her knitting from a drawer and seated herself, opposite him, beside the fire.

" Are you never," he asked, " for one moment idle ? "

" Oh, I don't know ! " she said. " There's always something to do. This is a wool suit for my brother's little boy. He'll be two at the end of the month."

" Surely," Leath said, " I know very little about women's work, but surely that ball is of colossal proportions ? "

" Oh, well, I always wind all the wool at once," she explained. " It saves having to stop when one's in an exciting place." Leath, who had never associated knitting with excitement, let it go at that. At all events, she appeared to have settled down quietly at last. He crossed his legs, gave his little preliminary cough, and began :—

" The matter on which I wished to see you concerns a silver statuette, attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, and reputed to be his masterpiece." He paused. " Perhaps you have never heard of Cellini ? "

" No," said Polly, serenely. " But I don't suppose he's ever heard of me."

" He is—ah—dead," Leath explained. " He died—some time ago. The statuette, if extant, will be—of intrinsic worth and great historical value." He paused again.

Polly's head was bent over her work, and he wondered if she were listening. "It was owned, in the eighteenth century, by Mendel of Cologne, for which reason it is still known as the Mendlean Apollo. But on the annexation of Cologne by the French Republic, in 1797, it disappeared. All trace of it was lost. It is supposed to have passed into the possession of Napoleon, but the matter rests without proof. It is also said that Napoleon carried it with him to St. Helena, and here I come to the purpose of my visit. One of the British officers stationed at St. Helena during Napoleon's imprisonment there was grandfather to a man of whom you may have heard Jim speak—old Stephen Greyling."

"Oh, yes, I know *him*," said Polly, with the first sign of interest she had, so far, shown.

"He was an eccentric creature," Leath continued. "He made me his literary executor. And the other day, while I was looking through his diary, in connection with a matter which has no bearing on this affair, I came across an entry which I had hitherto dismissed as of no account: 'Gave M. A. to J. B.,' it read. And suddenly it struck me that 'M. A.' might, by some strange freak of fate, stand for the Mendlean Apollo."

AGAIN he paused. Polly was counting stitches.

"Of course, I am aware that the theory is fanciful, and that, in any case, there are many millions of persons owning the initials J. B. But the entry was dated June 4th, which, as you know, was Jim's birthday. Also Jim was his godson. So that I felt it my duty to let you know of my discovery—if discovery it is. The finding of the lost Apollo would be a matter of no small import. I was wondering," he concluded, raising his voice, "if you would be able to help me."

"No," said Polly, definitely. "I can't help you at all, Charles. I don't know any of these names you've been talking about, except old Mr. Greyling's. But Jim had ever so many things, ornaments and such-like, and if you care to look among them for what you want you're welcome. They're all in cupboards in the loft. I put them there when he died. I don't like anything about the place that isn't useful. There are no ornaments in my rooms."

He looked round him, marvelling that he had not before noted this fact. Many lovely and valuable objects were there, but each fulfilled some purpose of utility. There were spills in a porcelain vase of the Ming dynasty. A bowl of black Wedgwood held flowers.

"But, as I say, if you like to look in the loft," Polly went on, "you'd have to take a candle, of course. Perhaps you might go in a minute or two, while I'm getting supper."

"Thank you, I will," Leath answered. At the prospect of a treasure-hunt his face brightened, his whole nature expanded. "And though I haven't known you for seven years—er—Polly, you've been my cousin for more than six: so may I offer to poke the fire?"

"That's good of you," said Polly, raising her eyes from her work to smile at him. "Charles is on your side." And suddenly, as she spoke the words, burning colour rushed over her cheeks. She stared at him in horror. Her mouth opened and shut. "The poker is on your side," she said at last, in a voice that trembled.

"The poker?" Leath said. "The poker? Charles?" Light dawned on him. "You named the poker after me?"

"Oh, don't take any notice of it!" cried Polly, terribly distressed. "When Jim was alive we had names for everything. It was all my fault. It was just a silly trick he caught from me."

"As stiff as a poker," Leath said. "Good God! As stiff as a poker."

"I reckon Jim didn't know you very well," Polly protested. "You haven't been stiff with *me*. Perhaps, now, you're more of a ladies' man, Charles? Anyway, we're not going to call the poker that any more. We'll call him Mrs. Morris, after the vicar's wife. Now, *she's* stiff, if you like!"

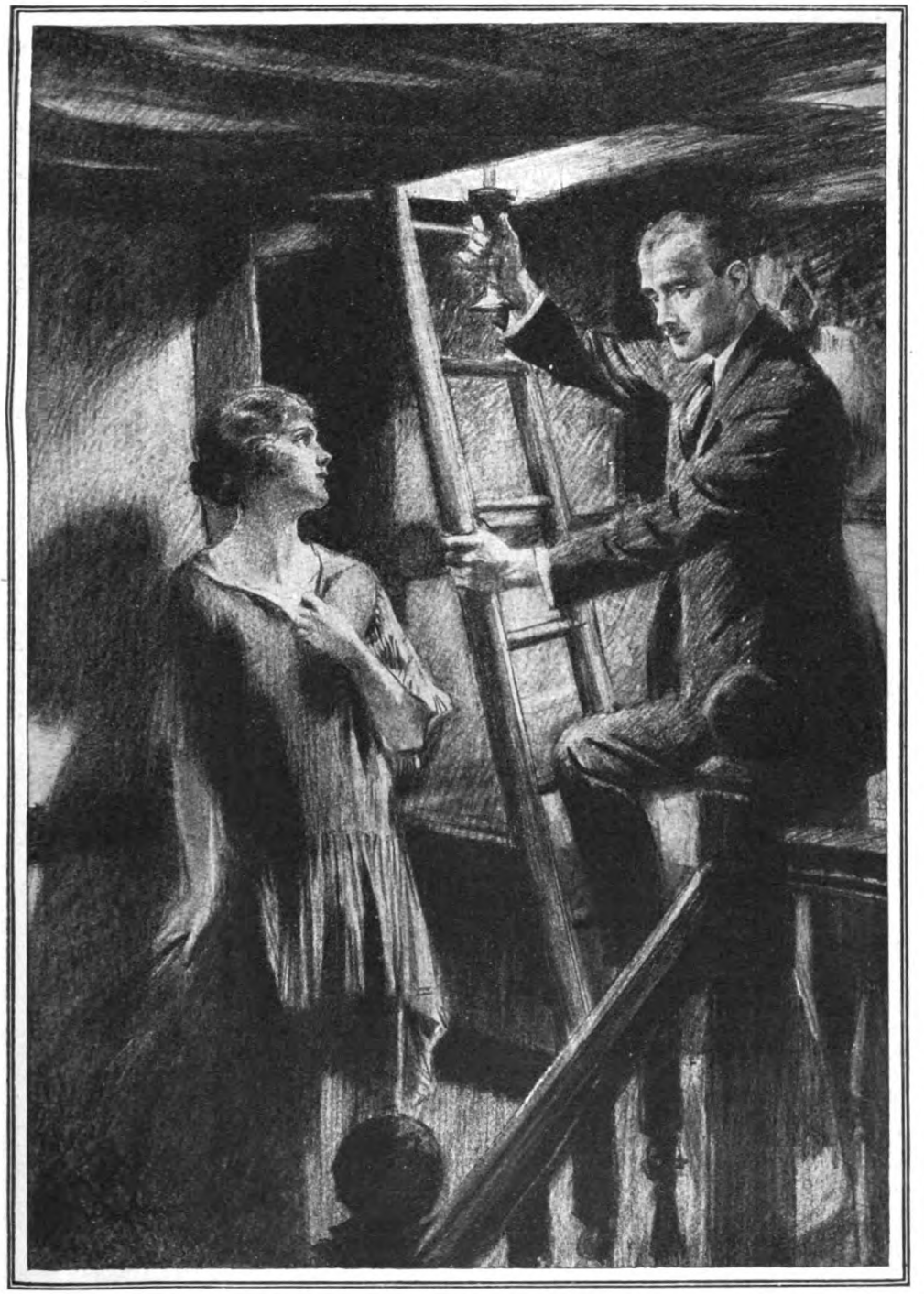
And then Leath laughed, throwing back his head, stretching his body in a chair that creaked and moved. The painful flush faded from Polly's face, and she laughed too, in her relief.

"No, we won't rename him!" Leath declared. "We'll keep him Charles, in memory," he made her a little bow, "of a strangely diverting evening. And now, if you'll show me the way to the loft, I'll do my best to make you the most envied woman in Europe."

"And I'll get the supper," Polly said.

The loft was reached by a ladder, and ran the length of the house. It seemed to Leath to be literally lined with cupboards. And each cupboard, shelf above shelf, was filled with newspaper packages of every size and shape. He undid one or two, and stared in amazement at the priceless things revealed. The fervour of the collector thrilled his blood. Impossible, by the light of one solitary candle, to do more than guess at the treasures these cupboards held.

"I wonder," he said to Polly, when she summoned him for supper, "if you have the slightest idea of the value of your possessions up there?"



"I wonder," he said to Polly, when she summoned him for supper, "if you have the slightest idea of the value of your possessions up there?"

"I know they're all good," she told him. "They won't come to any harm in the loft. And I'm very careful about fire. Did you find whatever it is you're looking for, Charles?"

"Heavens, no!" he said. "It'll take me a week, at least, to go through all those parcels. And I must be thinking about my train now. But if I returned to-morrow, and stayed at the Manor, would you allow me to come here every day and search for the Apollo? It is really a matter of great importance, you know."

"Why not stay to-night, then?" Polly suggested. "You can stay here. The spare bed's aired, and you can have Jim's pyjamas."

Leath hesitated, looking round the cosy room, soft with lamplight. Somehow, his London mansion, in that most exclusive square, seemed less desirable than before. There was a loneliness about the place. And, after all, in a way he was a relation. If she liked to ask him to stay he had every right to accept. And yet——

"If you're thinking it wouldn't be proper," Polly said, "I've got my sister Bessie living with me, though she won't be in till late to-night."

"In that case," said Leath, "I accept with pleasure."

HE fell asleep to the silence of the country and the smell of lavender-scented sheets. He woke to the sound of Polly's untrained contralto singing about the house. Presently she knocked at the door and called that his bath was ready. He shaved with Jim's razor, and descended to a solitary breakfast. Polly and her sister had breakfasted an hour before. The sister, Polly explained, worked in the village store and was engaged to the owner's son. She listened in surprise to his inevitable protestations.

"Your income is sufficient to support you both. Why should she work?"

"Well, but why shouldn't she?" Polly countered. "There's not enough in this house for two of us to do; and if she was to lounge about, all idle, she'd get turning up her nose at Sam, and yet not be good enough for a gentleman."

"You married a gentleman," Leath said, sharply. "And, by all accounts, you made him very happy."

"Ah, but there aren't many like Jim," Polly answered. "And what would he have said to me, anyhow, wasting my time gossiping like this? You let me know when you've finished, Charles, and then you can go straight up to the loft."

The search for the Mendlean Apollo proved abortive that day, and the next, and the next. Leath stayed on. Since Polly took no interest in the finding of the lost treasure, it was, he told himself, his duty to Jim's memory to find it for her. He made the acquaintance of Bessie, a shy but friendly creature, beautiful with that loveliness which is the gift of generations of clean-living, simple-minded folk. But she spoke less carefully than Polly, who had evidently been tutored by Jim. One evening, sitting with Polly by the fire, he heard voices in the kitchen.

"Who's in there?" he asked her.

"Bessie and Sam," she told him. "Sam always comes on Tuesdays."

"But why doesn't she bring him in here?" he demanded.

"What'd be the sense of that?" Polly retorted. "You wouldn't know what to say to Sam, and he'd be nervous in front of you. As it is, we're all quite comfortable." Leath gave it up.

But now he was beginning to resent Bessie's presence in the house. He wanted Polly to himself. The hunt for the Apollo was finished. Three times had he looked through those crowded cupboards, in vain. Yet still he stayed on, quieting his conscience with the fact that Polly never asked how his search was progressing. Every morning, while she was busy about the house, he wasted time in the loft. Afterwards he accompanied her to the village shop, solemnly carrying her basket. And gradually, as though learning to trust him, she allowed him to help her in her multitudinous duties. One afternoon, trembling with the honour, he was actually permitted to get the tea. Her simple friendliness shamed him, for he knew he was remaining there under false pretences. And now he made a compromise with that nagging inward monitor: when Polly had finished the wool suit which she had been knitting on his first evening, he would tell her of his failure, and go.

Now all his cunning was bent on hindering her task. He hired a car, and took her for long drives in the afternoons. He taught her to play picquet with him in the evenings. He cut holes in his socks, and brought them to her to darn. This knitting, he had discovered, was a species of recreation, picked up when there was nothing else to do. But in spite of all his endeavours the suit grew at a disturbing rate.

"Of course, you'll make a cap as well," he said one evening, clutching at a further chance of procrastination.

"Oh, do you think so?" Polly asked. "I'm afraid there won't be enough wool."

"Good heavens!" he said, indignantly, "I never heard of such a thing as making a child a suit without a cap to match."

"Well, I'll see about it," Polly temporized. "There isn't as much wool as there looks, even, because it's wound on something."

Bessie's ring sounded through the house, and she hurried out to open the door. There was a long, whispered colloquy between the two women in the hall. Leath wondered what they were talking about. Then Polly returned alone. Her face was disturbed, and she took up her work without looking at him, and knitted silently for some time. Leath, with acute annoyance, watched the small ball of wool growing smaller. At last Polly spoke.

"I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to go, Charles," she said.

"Go?" said Leath, not comprehending. "Go where?"

"Back to your own home," Polly explained. "You've got a nice home now, haven't you, Charles?"

FURY seized him. After all these weeks of labour on her behalf, toiling and searching for a treasure whose value she was unable to conceive, here he was being turned out of the house like a discharged workman! Before him, vast and menacing, like some horrible mausoleum waiting for his corpse, loomed the vision of his lonely London house. It was intolerable! It was cruelly unjust! His voice, as he answered, cut the silence like a knife.

"Certainly. I will leave to-night, with apologies for having outstayed my welcome, and thanks for your most patient hospitality. But I confess," he went on, with studied politeness, "that I am curious to know the reason for this sudden request."

"You see, Charles," said Polly, terribly embarrassed, "Bessie's had a quarrel with Sam, and I think perhaps it's your fault."

"My fault?"

"I'm afraid," Polly explained, "she's fallen in love with you."

"That's the most preposterous excuse I've ever heard in my life!" Leath retorted, white with rage. "Why, I hardly ever see the girl! I scarcely speak to her! How could she be in love with me?"

"No one could help loving you, Charles," Polly said.

And again, as on the evening when she had revealed the name of the poker, over her face and neck the burning colour rushed.

"No one——" Leath repeated. "No one—— Polly!" he shouted, suddenly, "are *you* in love with me?" He sprang to his feet, towering above her. "Put down that confounded knitting, and look me in the eyes. Answer my question. Will you marry me?"

"No, Charles," said Polly, steadily. "It wouldn't be fair. You're a great gentleman. You've got fine London friends."

"Be damned to the lot of them!" he cried. "Where Jim found happiness I'll find mine, living with you here in the paradise you made for him. No, I won't, though! I'm not going to keep my treasure hidden from the world. I tell you, Polly, London would go mad over you, with your shrewd common sense, and your ridiculous little busynesses, and your dear, delicious, childish way of naming everything you possess. All the women will be copying you, naming their teapots Marcus, and all the men will be waiting in queues to cut my throat. You'll be more than a cult: you'll become a religion! You shall wear the family jewels, my dearest. You shall curtsy to the King. Polly, Polly, marry me, and teach me how to play!"

She spoke no word, but her tearful, tender face was answer enough. He took her in his arms and kissed the tears away. Now, at last, after all these weeks of hungering, her lips were yielded to his.

"Say you love me!" he insisted, crushing her to him. And she tiptoed to his ear and whispered, "I love you, Charles!"

He threw back his head, laughing in triumph. Her wool, forgotten and tangled on the floor, was wound about his feet. He kicked the ball away. It rolled the length of the room, and returned to him again. And suddenly, with an exclamation, he stooped to pick it up, staring at the spool, now revealed, on which it was wound. Polly called out and protested, but he tore the wool away. Now the spool was free. In his hand it lay, a masterpiece, inimitable, unmistakable.

"The Mendlean Apollo!" he cried, and held it up on high.

"Oh, *him?*" said Polly, wonderingly. 'Why, I always call him Jones!"

The Trials of a Joke-Hunter

by

L. RAVEN-HILL

Illustrations reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

ALL the world loves to laugh—and never more than to-day, when the price of everything we want to eat and to drink and to wear remains always a good bit more than it should be, and the shadow of the income-tax man is never far from our door. It's a great life trying to help people to laugh; but it's not an easy one!

It means that whenever you wake on a bright morning with a light heart, or on a dark morning with a sad heart and a touch of liver, there is this whisper in your ear: "There is a drawing due from you to-day! To-day you have got to run across something funny! Where are you going to find it?"

Ah, indeed! *Where?*

Is it strange that, after a good few years of joke-hunting, I still think unkindly of the sympathetically gushing lady who sailed up to me with a smile and a "I *do* admire your work, Mr. Raven-Hill; of course, all your ideas for jokes just COME to you naturally, do they not?"

Dear lady, they do not. On the contrary, you have to go after them, and it is necessary to keep going. The feeling that one must not lose a single chance of snatching a joke from the surrounding world becomes part of the professional joke-hunter. I remember a frosty morning when the steps of my house had not been treated with the proper dope of ashes or salt or sand. I slipped upon the frozen surface and came a painful purler. The bump at the bottom

OUR VILLAGE MATCH.

First Batsman: "Why can't yer call when you're coming?"
Second Batsman: "'Cause I don't want to put the fielder on his guard."

of the steps put me out of action for a little time, but as the stars flocked round me and the universe overturned, one thought persisted above all: "Now how can I make a joke out of this?"

Fashions in jokes change. In the old days the securing of the jest was, perhaps, an easier matter. A cynical brother in the craft, now dead, used to assure me that the joke itself did not matter very much; it was the drawing that counted. You either stole your jokes, said he, or you bought them at half a crown a time from professional peddlers, who also stole them from somewhere or other. I think he was wrong then; certainly he would be wrong now. That great heart among artists and among men, Phil May, didn't steal his. He took them out of the life he loved and knew, just as we try to do to-day. The artist who depended on a selection of jokes bought for half a crown would quickly feel a draught. There is a story that Du Maurier used to invite jokes from his friends, and to drop them, as they came, into a vase. Then he would dip into the vase, take the first one that came to hand, and illustrate it in his inimitable way. Too simple, too easy—I never believed that story, and the slightest study of Du Maurier's work is enough to strengthen my disbelief.

"Oh, George, we must have stepped off with the wrong foot!"

It can't be done that way. The joke that gets home and is remembered is the joke which makes the public, seeing it, say, "I might have been lucky enough to meet the characters in that drawing. They would have looked like that, and like that they would have spoken. That incident, that conversation, might have happened."

In nearly every case the good joke has to come straight out of the box of life. My own experiences in the old Volunteers gave me many a drawing. What invention could beat the phraseology of the colonel who, disgusted at the poor showing of his men in some manœuvre, thus chastised them for their failure:—

"You have disgraced your country, yourselves, your town, your mother, and your King — and you have disgraced *ME!*"

That happened. What else could you do but pop that enraged warrior into a picture, straight out of life?

I cannot remember whether the hero of that drawing was my own colonel, who provided me (and the public) with laughter more than once. Both in private life and for the hectic fortnight of the annual training he was a great man. In private life he was chairman of the local bank, president of the agricultural show—a man of parts. At the bank his special sanctum was separated by a partition from the little room where his secretary worked, and in the partition was a window-like opening, a barred opening.

One busy day the colonel, overworked, was in one of his bad-temper moods. The business of the day was not going as smoothly as it should, and the autocrat's own disturbance of mind was communicating itself to the harassed secretary, who was a very nervous man.

The secretary received a bundle of letters and documents, properly signed by his chief, through the barred opening, and went back to his table, congratulating himself that the day was nearly finished. Searching

the bundles, he could not find an important letter which he had handed in for signature. Through the partition he could hear the colonel growling largely to himself, and feared to approach him. But, not daring to leave the missing letter over till the following day, he crept to the opening and timidly peered through the bars.

Sitting at his desk, his chief was so obviously in a raging temper that the poor secretary found it hard to begin his stammering request for the missing letter. Then the colonel looked up and saw him, and annoyance at the sudden apparition brought his rage to its topmost power. He swept a pewter inkstand to the floor and roared in anguish: "What do you want NOW? Do you take me for a dam' tiger?"

The Army is an easier field than the Navy for the man after jokes. The life of the Navy is more concentrated and highly technical. A joke that would be appreciated at Devonport or Portsmouth would not be understood in London. It must be twenty years ago since I "did" the able seaman reporting sick and thus explaining what was the matter with him:—

Owner of Pram Dinghy: "What d'you think of my boat?"
Friend: "Where did you pinch it? Off a roundabout?"

"Well, sir, I eats well enough, I sleeps well, and I drinks well—but when I sees a job of work I'm all of a tremble!"

How long does a joke live, I wonder? I have dated that special example, and since then — not with the able seaman hero, but with many different characters —it has appeared in various papers dozens of times. When I did it, it seemed quite new to me, but it would not surprise me should the scientist find in Egypt a graven tablet putting

"Whatever you do, don't let go of the corkscrew!"

nearly the same words in the mouth of one of Pharaoh's unwilling slaves. If any man swears to you that he *knows* the joke he tells you is absolutely original, he lies!

Sometimes, by great good luck, the professional joke-hunter runs bang upon a joke ready-made for him, and lifts it there and then out of the actual happening. On the front of a seaside place one summer evening I encountered a merry soul, a stranger to the town, who had dined gloriously. With an endearing friendliness of spirit, he attached himself to me at once. He was well dressed, and except that he tried continually to put his unlighted cigar into his right ear instead of between his lips, I found no fault with him. In a minute he begged me to direct or lead him back to his hotel. He had arrived only that afternoon, and for the life of him he could not remember where he had driven to from the station, where he had booked a room.

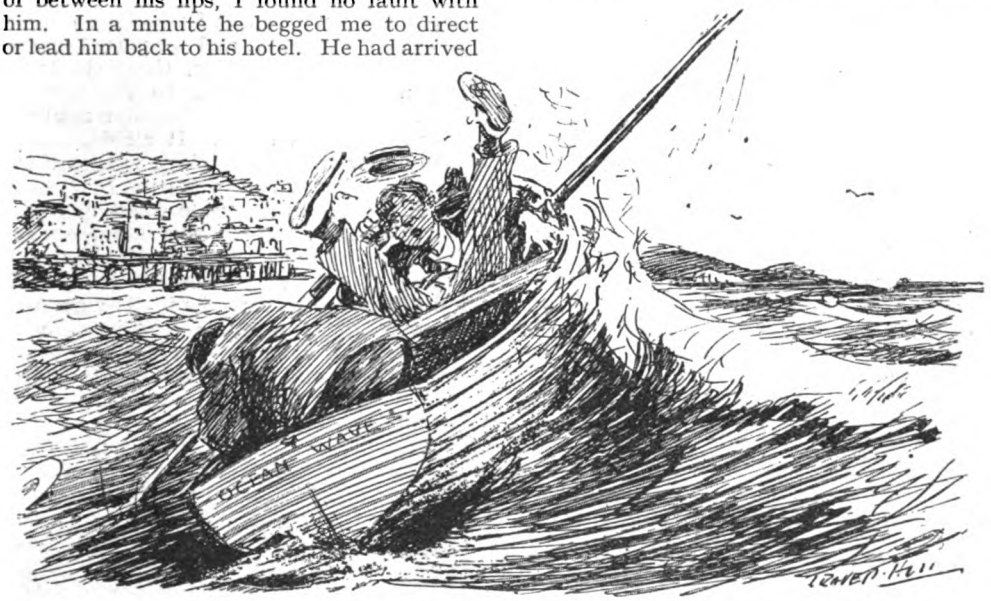
Of course, I was willing to help him in his predicament, but this detail of forgetfulness made the task hard. I ran off the names of the hotels I knew, in the hope that I might successfully stir his memory. It was no use. With the name of every hotel in the town, it seemed to me, I still drew blank. At last he spoke, looking up with a smile of completely unhelpful triumph—convinced that he had solved the bothering problem.

"I can't remember which hotel it was," he assured me, "but" (this very wisely) "I'm sure it wasn't the Temperance Hotel!"

Both the holiday life of the seaside and the adventures of small-boat sailing have always appealed to me as good fields for humour. The first, which yearly draws so many people from the dull routine of their wage-earning work, and, in a way, puts them off their usual guard, has been full of little brightnesses, either actually seen or composed half of reality and half of imagination. One that came direct and complete from a famous seaside resort I will not mention is of the poor, unhappy, seasick tripper and his heartbroken rebuke to his companion who has caught a vast "crab." The picture is given here, under the title "Joys of the Sea."

Coming to small-boat sailing, it is one of the rewards of my insufficiently remunerated but hard-working life that I have always been a sailing enthusiast. To be aboard (as self-constituted captain) a well-built six or ten-ton cruiser with the right company and one man who can really cook on a Primus stove is—I say it with my hand upon my heart—the only life really worth mentioning.

For a long time the only sailing jokes concerned the predicament of the unfortunate who has gone overboard. I, too, among my brother artists, have been an offender in this respect, as you will see by the picture, "Whatever you do, don't let go of the corkscrew!" But after a time this subject got monotonous, despite all trimmings with which it was treated, and other subjects had to be found. Of these the convivial yachtsman who has retired



JOYS OF THE SEA.

The Unhappy One (to friend who has caught a crab): "I wish you wouldn't try to be funny."

far too late during a night ashore, and is desperately and unsuccessfully trying tidily to furl his unaccustomed bed in the belief that he is dealing with the mainsail of his beloved ship, pleased me greatly—although I cannot vouch for its being an actual incident.

The trials of the constant search for jests that will "carry" illustration are not very much lessened—I hope my many correspondents will not think this ungracious—by the numbers of letters that come to me enclosing some notion which has appeared funny to the writer. Not twice a year does such an "outside" letter convey a notion with point enough to justify a drawing. But I do count as very special blessings among my friends those cheery souls who are fond of their fellow-men and have the gift of quickly seeing the humour in things seen or things overheard. From these, often, a suggestion grows into a picture.

Late on the night of the worst storm London experienced for years, a writer friend of mine was sheltering under the portals of St. Martin's Church. Close to him another man stood. The rain was coming with such force that columns of water seemed to be springing up from the roadway; through the flood-time gloom the lights of a coffee-stall were blurred and dim. The man broke the silence with this remark: "Looks a bit threatening-like, don't it, mister?"

It would be difficult to better that as an expression of the resigned and fatalistic attitude to life of a middle-aged failure of the streets.

An unpleasant memory persists with me of a joke of which I myself was the victim. In a country hotel a stranger asked me if it were true that I welcomed, now and then, any good idea for a joke. Upon my admitting that was so, he placed in my hands a folded paper whose purport and colour were equally disagreeable. A friend in the place, with no sense of humour worth mentioning, had evilly directed him to me. The folded paper was a writ. But I stood the stranger his particular fancy, and we parted friends.

The joke of antiquity, the "chestnut," is generally supposed to be the terror of the humorist's life, but I cannot really see why this should be so. It all depends on the quality of the jest. If it is a good jest, why shouldn't it bear repeating?

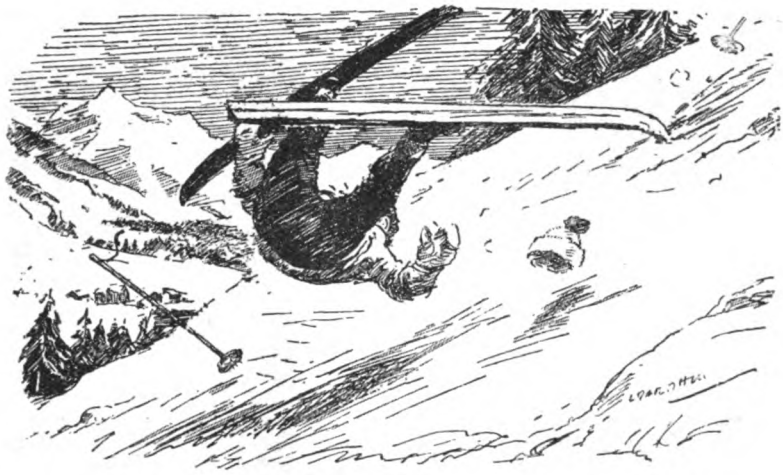
Some subjects are unfortunately lost to us professional joke-hunters in these milder Pussyfoot days; whether this is for the better or otherwise must be left to the individual taste of readers. The good old convivial joke of our forefathers, in the kindlier days when the care-free return from the banquet and the bottle was one of the

Convivial Yachtsman (very much between land and water): "I will get this beastly sail furled before I turn in."

main sources of inspiration, has nearly departed from us.

No longer may the people in our pictures fall into snowdrifts on the journey home, in the manner of the Scotch elder who thus apostrophized his own top-hat—of the loss of which he was blissfully unconscious—resting on the snow a few yards away from him:—

"Losh! Yon puir mannie's waur off than masel'!"



Extract from correspondence of obscure person in Switzerland: "Don't be surprised if you see my photograph in one of the Society papers."

Among our careful editors there still remain one or two who will admit the convivial jest to their chaste pages—but you must spell whisky "whusky," and the jest must apply to Scotsmen. Which is strange, considering that east to west and round about it is the Scotsman who rules the kingdom of Fleet Street, holding all the best positions.

I always liked the story of the hospitality which followed the death of the gude leddy of a Scotch farm. Many were bidden to the funeral, some from places afar off, and as the guests arrived the wine of the country was much in evidence. At length the farmer reminded them that time was passing and the hearse waiting. Solemnly all the guests took their places in the procession, and solemnly marched down the country road. They had covered perhaps a couple of hundred yards when an agonized shriek from a woman flying in pursuit made them halt and wonder. It was one of the daughters of the house.

"Bide a wee," she commanded. "Ye're awa' withoot mither!"

I must linger no more with the convivial joke that is passing from us. Other subjects have, of course, come to our help to take its place. Golf is one of these. The funny man who draws for a living has to keep abreast of this world-movement of golf, but personally the game and its humour leave me cold. This heretic's confession will perhaps cause many of my friends to give me the cold shoulder, but I lived for five years almost on top of a golf links, and haunted the club in the endeavour to extract some humour from the game, or sport, or obsession—whatever its proper description is. But apart from the attempts of colonels to express, and parsons to suppress, their feelings while playing the game, golf seems to me far too solemn a subject to trifle with, and I leave it (with admiration) to my brother artists. They play golf, and I don't—but they all assure me that some day I am certain to begin. They're wrong.

I suppose it is the mention of brother artists which reminds me of a little-known story of Whistler. Brother artists of his were afraid of his malicious wit, but there were few of them who did not value his opinion. B. W. Leader, who had just finished a huge canvas, invited Whistler to his studio to see the picture. Whistler came, saw the picture, was welcomed, was entertained. But what he thought of his host's work was long in coming. At last poor Leader had to bluntly ask him what he thought of the just-completed work.

Whistler took his stand once again before the canvas. The seconds that passed then were like an hour to the host, nervously waiting the verdict of his famous guest. At last, in a very deliberate way, Whistler lifted a hand. With a finger he traced round a small circle in the centre of the enormous canvas.

"I like that bit," he praised, cordially. "I like that! Very nice!"

Let me finish on a note of warning to artists, amateur or otherwise, comic or serious, or half-way between. Hide your sketch-book as much as possible. If you carry it in your hand, open to the world's view, every fat man you meet will be your deadly enemy. What's the use of being unpopular if you can prevent it?

"THE FINING POT IS FOR SILVER-"

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

GEOFFREY WAYNEFLETE whistled cheerfully as he emerged from his dressing-room to the corridor of that bijou little eighteenth-century house in Mayfair which was his. That morning, as every other morning for six months past, all was distinctly well in his world. He tapped at the white-enamelled door of his wife's boudoir, entered.

She was not alone. Her mother was there also, rose for tactful departure in dowager-like dignity, a folded-back newspaper in her hand, from the low chair at the other side of the fire. Felice looked round to him, flashed a smile at him from the vivid loveliness of her eyes and mouth. She needed no hour or two of matutinal seclusion before she could smile with sincerity; there was no moment of the day when Geoffrey Wayneflete, coming upon her, did not see the leap of a happy radiance in her eyes, alert to greet him. And, splendid and stately though she could look in the *toilette* for an evening reception, she perhaps never looked more beautiful than in the daintiness of this early-morning *négligé*, the gold of her luxuriant hair massed in loose coils upon her shoulders pending the later ministrations of her maid. He bent over and kissed her, with a little stir of gratitude to the Fates. Then, in a politeness of Continental gallantry learned years back when he was junior attaché in the Embassy at Rome, he bowed over the old Baronessa's extended hand, pressed his lips dutifully upon her finger-tips.

He chided himself for not liking the old lady more. Although her residence with them had been a condition of their marriage, she never intruded—effaced herself, in fact, almost pathetically, whenever he appeared. But he could not bring himself to affection for her, any more than he could achieve more than mere toleration for that eternally present, irritatingly-polite Count Ardnassy, who was some sort of cousin in a genealogy that had become internationally mixed at the time of the Austrian domination in Italy. However, Felice could not be held responsible for her relations, and she never thrust them upon him. She sympathized with him frankly, with a golden laugh that reduced the annoyance to its proper proportions. "*Cosa vuole?*" she would say, relapsing into her native Italian. "One cannot disown one's family." And the family of the Contessa Moragnano-Triconopoli di Serrato, now simply and happily Mrs. Geoffrey Wayneflete, was apparently intertwined with half Europe.

The Baronessa had silently disappeared. Felice smiled up at him.

"The breakfast is coming, Geoffrey, dee-ar," she said in her vibrant contralto speaking-voice, her precisely-correct English made piquant by the touch of foreign accent. "Ham and eggs and kidneys—oh, such lots for my big hungry barbarian!"

He laughed. These breakfasts in her boudoir were a compromise between her Continental bedside cup of coffee and his unalterably British tradition of a square meal, a compromise arrived at on the now six months distant honeymoon which had followed so swiftly upon that intoxicating first acquaintance in the Riviera hotel

Copyright, 1924, by F. Britten Austin.

half-empty at the end of the season. He found a perpetuation of romance in the delightful intimacy of this meal, where, fascinating in her soft loose wrap of crêpe de Chine, she sipped her own exiguous thimbleful of black fluid in the intervals of piling his plate with the substantial viands that aroused her mirth.

He sat down by the fire, picked up the folded-back newspaper left by the Baronessa, ran his glance down the column the old lady had evidently been reading. Save for a flying accident — a privately-chartered machine had crashed in Kent *en route* from London to Geneva, and both pilot and passenger had been killed—there was no news worth a conversational mention. And the flying accident elicited no more than an "Oh?" of the faintest interest from her. The tone indicated a withdrawal of attention from his talk which was unwonted. He looked up to see her staring into the fire, one white arm supporting her chin as she leaned forward in the chair opposite to him, lost evidently in deep thought, her beautiful face a mask that had gone suddenly expressionless.

"A penny for them!" he offered, jocularly.

She roused herself, smiled—deep grey eyes wide-open at him—shook her head.

"No, *caro mio*. They are thoughts for myself—they would make you too proud." She smiled again at him, tenderly, a magic coming into the perfection of her features. "Let me keep them."

He rose and came over to her, put an arm about her.

"Now I must certainly know," he commanded, in fond playfulness. "I insist on being told."

She sighed, spoke with an illogical swell of moisture filling the eyes that smiled up at him.

"Very well, then—if my lord insists—I was thinking how happy—how very happy—I have been these six months."

It was on the tip of his tongue to say: "Happier than with your first husband?" He saved himself from the crudity, said nothing—put all his leap of affection into the sudden embrace with which he clasped her, into the kiss that met her upturned lips in a close and mutual pressure.

The opening of the door separated them. A prim maid entered with the breakfast tray. Covering with a hasty plausibility of laughter their embarrassment of lovers all but caught in the act, they seated themselves at the table, smiled at one another, impatient for a renewal of solitude. Breakfast was, as it always was, a meal of happy fondnesses, greedy for a last touch of hands before they separated for his work, of pretty playfulnesses where she overwhelmed his plate with bacon, gorged him after that with toast and marmalade, calling him "barbarian" in a tone that compelled a kiss. If ever there was a happy man, it was Geoffrey Wayneflete.

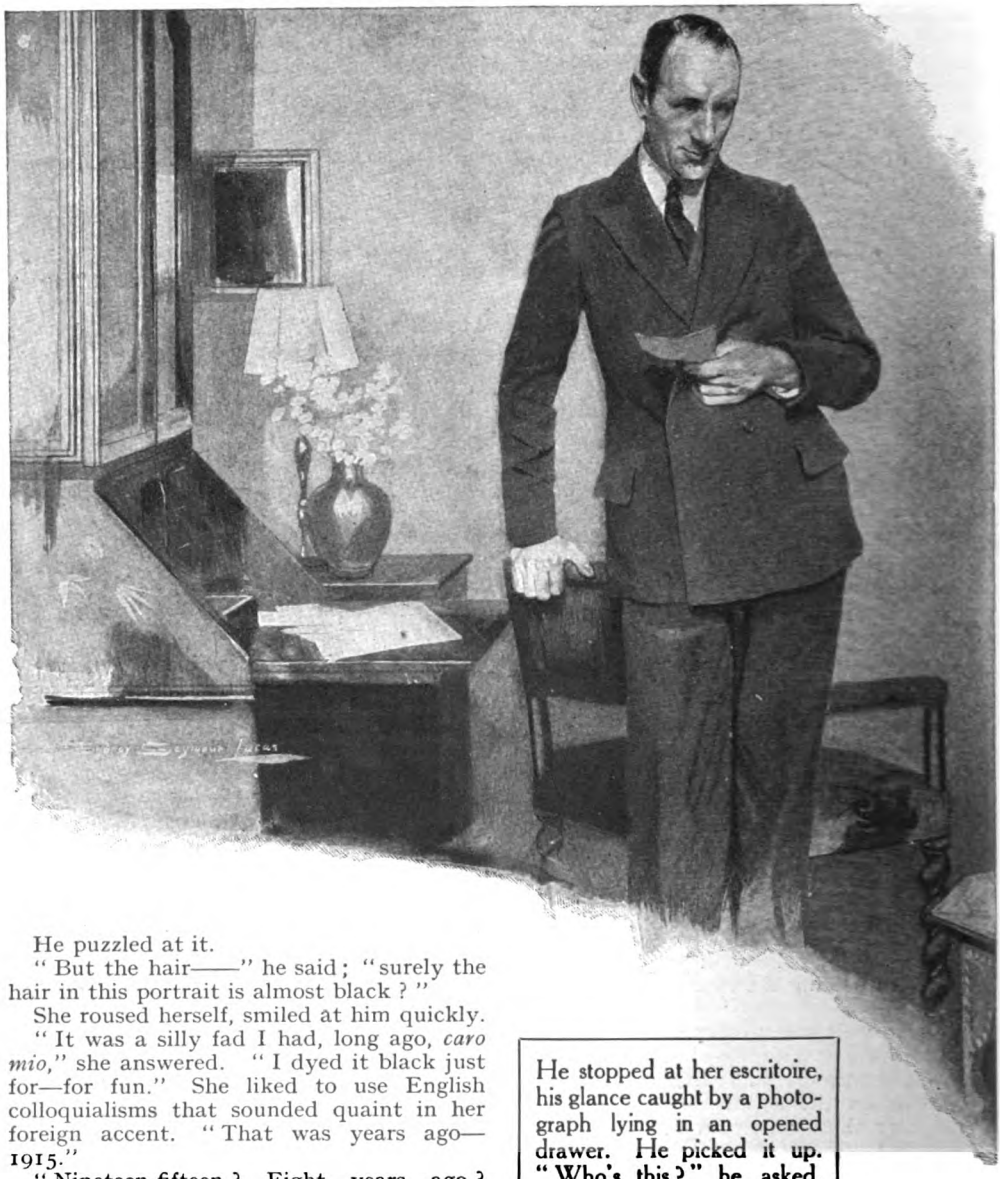
He had reason for happiness. How should a man, still on the right side of thirty-five, the inheritor of ample means, blessed by the Fates with the most adorable of wives, not be happy when, in addition to this private felicity, his professional career is lit with the lamps of promise? And Geoffrey Wayneflete's career was passing out of the stage of promise into the satisfaction of fulfilment. The Chief's selection of him for secretary to that intensely "hush-hush" Committee on Co-ordinated Imperial Defence, which almost daily for the past two months had been wrestling with not-to-be-whispered problems behind locked doors, was more than an omen; it was the road thrown open. His colleagues at the F.O. dropped their voices as he passed, murmured the magic words "a coming man." The Chief, undemonstrative though he was, a man whose eyes looked into the distance while he stroked his pointed little grey beard before he spoke, pregnantly and sententiously, smiled at him. Others might dread that quietly but ruthlessly efficient Chief; Geoffrey Wayneflete loved him in a happy loyalty that was more than the loyalty of departmental tradition. He could meet his eyes in reciprocated confidence. It was characteristic of a certain fundamental honest simplicity in him that he threw his soul into his work more for his Chief's sake than his own; his creed of life summed up in a determination not to "let down" the man who trusted him.

THERE was yet a quarter of an hour before he need start for the office when breakfast was finished. He rose from the table, lit himself a cigarette, wandered across to the window to look at the autumn morning. She returned to her chair by the fire, a cigarette between her fingers also, leaned back watching him through the drifting whorls of tobacco-smoke.

He came back from the window, stopped at her escritoire, his glance caught by a photograph lying in an opened drawer. He picked it up.

"Who's this?" he asked. It was a portrait of a woman in a black evening dress with a black bracelet on her bare arm. The features were those of Felice, but the hair was dark instead of blonde. "A sister?"

"No," she replied, as though her central thoughts were preoccupied with something else. "It is of me."



He stopped at her escritoire, his glance caught by a photograph lying in an opened drawer. He picked it up. "Who's this?" he asked.

He puzzled at it.

"But the hair——" he said; "surely the hair in this portrait is almost black?"

She roused herself, smiled at him quickly.

"It was a silly fad I had, long ago, *caro mio*," she answered. "I dyed it black just for—for fun." She liked to use English colloquialisms that sounded quaint in her foreign accent. "That was years ago—1915."

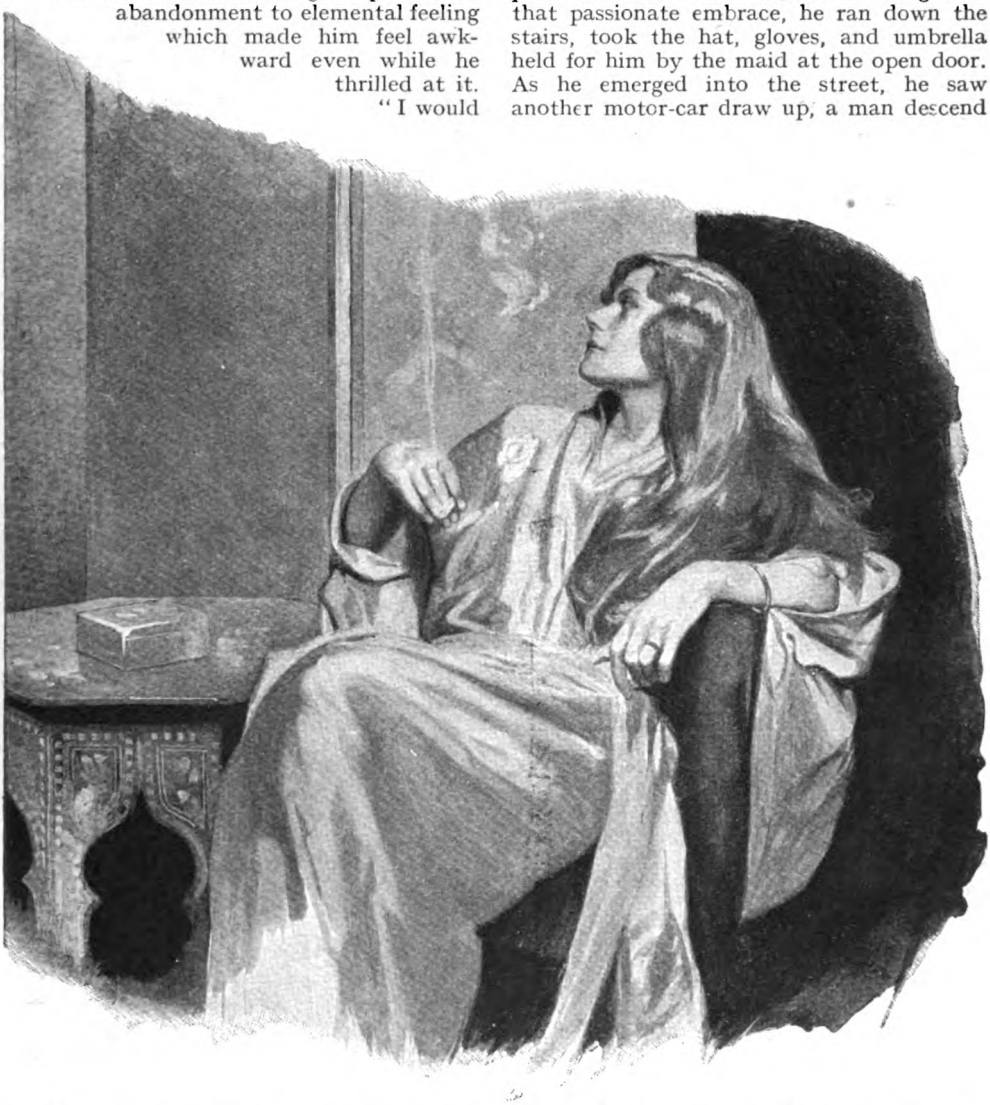
"Nineteen-fifteen? Eight years ago? But, my dear, you were only nineteen then?" he objected. "And here you look as old as you do now—older almost." He looked from the photograph to her, comparing them.

She rose from her chair, came across to him, put one arm around him while with her free hand she gently took the photograph from him, laid it face downward in the drawer. Then her face came up to his.

"I looked old then, *caro mio*, because I was not happy. Do not remind me of those old things—I want to forget." He bent down, kissed her. She had allowed him to understand that the history of her first marriage was painful, and, chivalrously, he consistently forbore from probing for it. He guessed that in some way that photograph revived unpleasant memories. Let them rest, he thought. They were no concern of his. The honest simplicity of the love which filled his soul was immune from petty retrospective jealousies. She went on in her vibrant contralto voice, while he held her close. "I want to forget everything—except that I am happy now, *caro mio*."

"You *are* happy—really happy?" he queried, smilingly, sure of her answer.

"Happy?—happy?" She gave a little laugh, flung her arms round him, crushed him tightly to her for a long ecstatic kiss, threw her head back to look at him with her profound grey eyes. "I did not know what happiness was till you came. Oh, Geoffrey, Geoffrey, I love you, I love you, I love you with every bit of my soul!" She clasped him close in an un-English passionate abandonment to elemental feeling which made him feel awkward even while he thrilled at it. "I would die for you! Whatever happens in our life, believe that!—I love you!" And she kissed him again as though she could never release him, a kiss that summoned up reciprocation in a flood.



The hooter of a motor-car sounded outside the window. It was the chauffeur, waiting to take him to the office. He tore himself from her, went into the bedroom, unlocked the steel safe dissimulated in a Louis XV. cabinet, took therefrom the large locked leather wallet which contained the precious summaries of the Committee's decisions on the previous day. He had worked late hours the night before, as he usually did, drafting them into a final precision of form. Then, still thrilling with that passionate embrace, he ran down the stairs, took the hat, gloves, and umbrella held for him by the maid at the open door. As he emerged into the street, he saw another motor-car draw up, a man descend from it. It was Count Ardnassy. He waved a friendly hand to him as he jumped into his own limousine, saw him, with a backward glance through the car window, go up to the door as he whirred swiftly away.

Twenty minutes later he entered the large, high-ceilinged Committee-room, sombre with its dark curtains and heavy Victorian furniture. To his surprise, all the members were already in their places around the long mahogany table. The white-moustached general, the clean-shaven, red-faced admiral, the comparatively youthful-looking representative of the Air Force, the civilian delegates from the Dominions, were all there, and all of them, unwontedly serious, were looking towards his Chief, who frowned while he thoughtfully caressed his pointed grey beard. What was the matter? He was not left long in suspense. The Chief spoke as soon as he had taken his place.

"Wayneflete, something very serious has occurred. There's a leakage of information from this room." He spoke with a curtness that covered a serious perturbation.

"Sir?" His ejaculation was one of startled incredulity.

The Chief's eyes rested on him.

"It is unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—beyond doubt," he said, quietly. "You may have seen in the newspaper that an aeroplane crashed in Kent yesterday afternoon, and both pilot and passenger were killed. Searching the passenger's body for papers to establish his identity, the local police discovered this." He held up a sheaf of typewritten pages. "Recognizing its importance, they telephoned Scotland Yard, and Scotland Yard telephoned me. It is Scheme B—upon which we came to our decision yesterday."

"Scheme B, sir?" exclaimed Wayneflete, in astonishment. "But how could anyone have got at it?"

"That is what we are going to find out before we go any farther," said the Chief. "The person who stole one document might steal another. Fortunately, our spy has made a little error in this case, for Scheme B, you will remember, is the one we rejected. But he might be more lucky another time."

"It defeats me how any of these papers could be got at, sir," said Wayneflete. "Right ones or wrong ones."

"That's the mystery we've got to solve. I have already questioned the other members of the Committee, and it seems almost certain that no one could have got at any of their copies. You, of course, have copies of every document we have considered and I believe you drafted out Scheme B for final consideration the night before last. What precautions do you take, Wayneflete?"

"I have been working every night at these plans alone in a locked room in my house, sir," he replied. "And during the night they are locked in a safe in my bedroom. Yesterday the Committee broke up at one o'clock. I went home to lunch, locked the papers in my safe, and returned in the afternoon to the office here. Last evening I worked at home on the final draft of Scheme C—the one decided on by the Committee—and when I took my wallet out of the safe there was no sign of it having been tampered with."

"Have you still got your copy of Scheme B?"

"It ought to be in my wallet, sir," replied Wayneflete, unlocking it and taking out a wad of papers. "Yes. Here it is." He held it out. "As you see, sir—it is scored across and clearly marked in red ink 'Rejected.' I can't think that any spy would have used that copy. It would have told him Scheme B was waste paper."

The Chief nodded as he turned over the cancelled sheets.

"Yes. That certainly seems to rule your copy out. No spy would have used this." He handed the papers back to Wayneflete. "There's another point. The man who copied out Scheme B—and his is clearly an unofficial copy—incorporated sundry potential amendments we made during discussion yesterday morning, before finally rejecting it. So not only did he think that he had the correct copy, but he must have got at that copy between one o'clock and three-thirty, when he started from Croydon. He had time enough. The aerodrome informs me that it was three o'clock when he telephoned for a machine."

"And has he been identified, sir?"

"He carried a Belgian passport in the name of Dupont. But that doesn't help us, for the passport was forged. However, we may know more in a few minutes. Very conveniently for us, he merely broke his neck, and was not disfigured. So I told them to prop him up and take his photograph. Pass Wayneflete one of those prints, General, will you?" Waynflete took the photograph, contemplated a portrait of a man—gruesome only because the circumstances were known—who sat up in a chair and stared in a lifelike manner with wide-open eyes. "You don't recognize him, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I have never seen him in my life."

The Chief nodded.

"I sent one of those prints across to Anson, and asked him to look him up and bring over any information he might have about him or his associates." He was interrupted by a tap at the door. "That's probably Anson himself. Just go and see, will you, Wayneflete?"

It was, in fact, Anson, the clever, humorous-faced chief of an unadvertised but highly efficient counter-espionage department at the other side of Whitehall.

There was an anticipative stir around the table as he came across the room, a large leather wallet under his arm.

"Well, Anson, have you got him?" asked the Chief.

"I think so, Sir William." Anson pulled up a chair to the table, unlocked the wallet, delved inside it. He extracted one of those stiff blue covers known in departmental parlance as a "jacket," opened it. On the top of the small pile of typewritten documents it contained lay a photograph. He passed it to the Chief. "Is that your man?"

The Chief compared the print with the one of the man in the chair.

"That's he, right enough. Don't you think so, General?" he said, handing on the photographs. The two prints were passed from hand to hand round the table. They were indubitably portraits of the same man. The verdict was unanimous. "Good work, Anson," said the Chief, as they were returned to him. "But who is he?"

A gratified smile came over Anson's comedian-like round face.

"I'll give you his *dossier*, Sir William. We've got all about him here." He picked up a sheet of typescript from the "jacket," read it out. "Here's the summary. L752 (our identification number). Jacques Lafond, *alias* Henri Pierrefort, *alias* Julius von Steinhaufen, *alias* Vicente Mendoza, *alias* Henry Kahn of Cincinnati. Real name believed to be Max Breitstein, born Hamburg, 1880. Joined Berlin Bureau, 1910. Worked Russia 1912-1914, Belgium August, 1914, Paris September, 1914, Madrid October, 1914. Touch lost till March, 1915. Worked for Boy-Ed and Von Igel in U.S., March, 1915, till August, 1917. Escaped from custody August 25th, 1917. Presumed to have gone to Mexico. Reported Barcelona February, 1918. Remained Barcelona till Armistice. Speaks equally well French, English, Spanish, Russian, and German. Very clever and daring agent. Usual associates: G156, G602, B9904, B8, B79, C586; reference also numbers under M834. There you are."

"But—a German agent?" objected one of the Dominion representatives. "Surely the Hun is down and out—he doesn't keep up his old espionage organization?"

"No, sir," agreed Anson. "He does not—at least not to the old extent. But you don't imagine that that magnificently-organized espionage system of his just committed suicide, do you? No, sir. It merely disintegrated more or less, and organized sections of it took service wherever they could find it—and they found it in nearly every country over Europe. I shouldn't like even to guess at what country our friend here was working for. Though we'll find out pretty soon."

"And who are those associates you mentioned, Anson?" asked the Chief. "They ought to be worth looking into."

"I've brought their *dossiers* along. It's just possible one of you might recognize the photograph of someone with whom you have been in contact." He took the jackets out of his wallet, removed a photograph—now of a man, now of a woman—from each, circulated them round the table. "Here you are: G156, G602, B8, B79, B9904, C586."

Wayneflete sharply scrutinized each as it was passed to him by the distinguished Admiral sitting on his left. To the best of his belief, he had seen the original of none of them in his life. He passed them one by one to his neighbour. An emphatic ejaculation from the Admiral made him look round.

"By Gad! That's a stunning woman!"

THE white-haired, ruddy-cheeked old fellow held a photograph twelve inches from his nose in connoisseur-like admiration. Wayneflete caught a sidelong glance at it—and with the glance life seemed to stop in him. *It was the photograph of a dark-haired woman in a black evening dress with a black bracelet on her bare arm.* An instinct to snatch it away, to scream out wildly that it was a mistake, an inconceivable impossibility, surged up in him, came to nothing in the trance-like fixation of his muscles, in the failure of his vocal chords to make a sound. He could only stare at it, paralysed, feeling himself suddenly sick and dizzy. Through the suspension of all his faculties he could hear the Admiral's jocular voice. "Who is she, Anson?"

"What's the number, Admiral?" Anson's tone was pleasantly cheerful.

"B79."

"B79—that's——" He picked out the specific *dossier*, uttered a little laugh of recognition. "Yes, that's a lady we should all of us have liked to get hold of during the war—she'd have gone like Mata Hara to a shooting party at dawn, and I dare say she'd have gone just as coolly. That, Admiral, is one of the best agents Germany ever had or is likely to have. Here's her summary." He read it out. "Anna Monescu, born Bucharest 1890. *Alias* Gräfin von Wildenau, *alias* Pauline de Ribaumont, *alias* Henriette Monségur, *alias* Marchesa di Doragno-Minelli, *alias* Contessa Elvira di Cavalcino, *alias* Contessa Ippolita Castelnuovo-Meneghini, *et alia*. Originally actress at Karl-Theater, Vienna. Married 1909, Francesco Durati, Austrian subject of Trieste, agent employed by Berlin Bureau

and executed by Italians May 17th, 1916. Worked Russia, England, France 1910 to 1915, Italy 1915 to 1917. Believed fled to South America, November, 1917. Touch lost since that date. Speaks fluently English, French, Italian, German, Spanish." He put down the *dossier*. "There you are, Admiral. Are you still attracted?"

To Wayneflete each word had been a blow at the heart that seemed as if it must stop at the next of that inexorable procession of cheerfully-uttered indictments. The Admiral chuckled a "No, thanks!" passed him the photograph. He took it with a hand he tried to keep from shaking. *Felice!*—Felice—*alias*—*alias*—*alias*—he blurred that sickening succession of *aliases*—Felice B79! He fought hard for a mask of self-possession as he made-believe to scrutinize the photograph at whose duplicate he had looked that morning. He felt that every eye at that table was upon him. It was a relief to pass it on, to get it out of his hands. At the same time the problem leaped up in him, searingly urgent for immediate solution. What must he do?—Speak? Speak—or——?

The Chief was talking.

"Well, gentlemen, do any of you recognize any of these photographs?"

He heard the negative answers come nearer and nearer to him along the table.

"Do you, Wayneflete?" It seemed to him that the old man must suspect as the calm eyes rested on him.

He answered, with a sudden grip on himself, in an agony lest the cold sweat on his brow should be remarked:—

"No, sir."

The Chief nodded, serenely unsuspicious, passed on with his interrogation. No one at that table recognized any of those photographs. No one. How Wayneflete continued to sit at it, he did not know. It seemed to heave and subside under the pressure of his leaning arms. But he must not faint. If he fainted, they would suspect. And—this shot up in him—for the honour of the Chief there must be no scandal. No scandal. He'd deal with it—himself—presently—when his brain cleared. But not now—for himself it did not matter—he was finished—finished—as Felice was finished—but the Chief who had trusted him, who had confided in him, who had backed his advancement, the Chief must not be publicly humiliated, must not even guess himself. He had only one loyalty left. Bludgeoned though he was, he guarded it with a spasm of will. He must hold out. With an inexpressible relief he heard the old man say quietly: "Well, gentlemen, I think you will agree that we should suspend our sittings until this mystery is cleared up," saw the members of the Committee rise from their places.

In that relief it was with an ironical indifference that he heard Anson's cheerful assurance.

"Give me a day or two, Sir William—and I'll have it all taped out for you."

A day or two! He could have laughed. An hour or two, and——! But he'd have to make it plausible, defeat Anson's certain suspicions.

HALF an hour later he stood, trembling, outside the door of her boudoir. The maid had told him she was within. For a moment, summoning up his strength, fighting for control of his quivering limbs, for the power of speech when he should enter, he hesitated, his hand upon the handle of the door. He turned it, went in.

She was there, alone. She was dressed in anticipation of his return for lunch, superbly beautiful in the exquisite simplicity of the gown whose delicate hue set off the golden glory of the hair to which, at the mirror over the fireplace, she was giving a final touch. The loveliness of her features, yet unconscious of him, was framed for him in their reflection. He shut the door, backed against it, stood looking at her.

Her head came round to him.

"Geoffrey! What is it? You look terrible!"

He could feel his eyes burning in his head, could feel the whiteness of his own face. Speech came.

"I know."

She stared at him. He saw an awful realization flood up in her—and his last furtive haunting phantom of merciful doubt vanished. He was face to face with the stark truth. He saw her strive for speech, achieve some sort of power over herself. Her eyes never left him. Her voice, when it came, was low and hoarse, difficult of utterance.

"You know?"

"Everything."

She stood silent, staring at him—waiting. They both waited. For a moment he felt that he could never step forward from that door, that they were both rooted there for a timeless confrontation in which a world crashed. She broke the spell, took an uncertain step towards him, half lifted her hands, dropped them hopelessly.

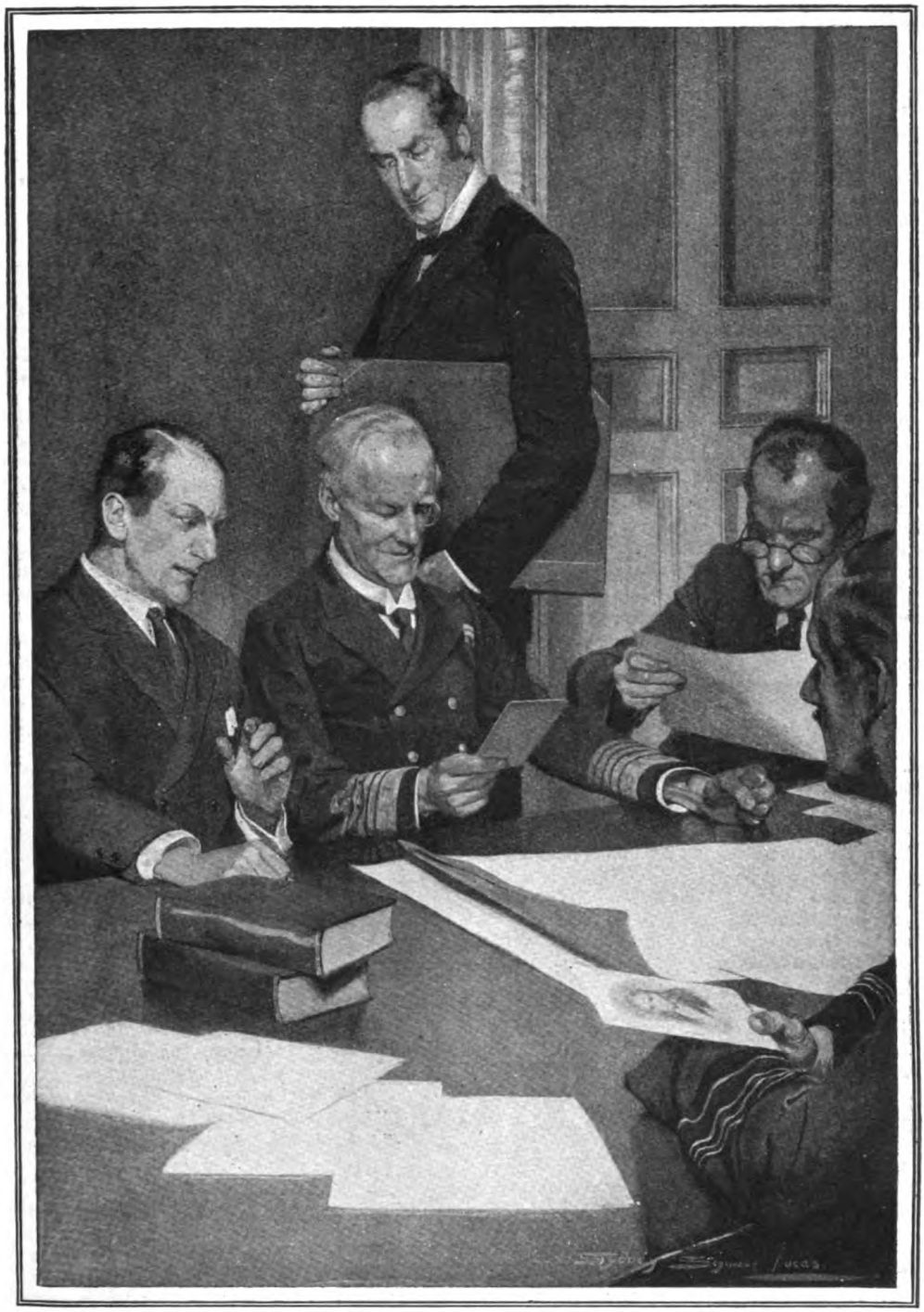
"Geoffrey!"

The poignancy of that one word came straight to his heart. He threw it off in bitter scepticism.

"No more play-acting!"

She checked, still staring at him. He saw her lips move soundlessly.

"Anna Monescu, originally actress at the Karl-Theater, Vienna. Married the Austrian



"By Gad! That's a stunning woman! Who is she, Anson?"

spy, Francesco Durati, in 1909 Spy yourself." He spoke with a harsh and accusatory precision, his voice strange in his own ears. "Anna Monescu, *alias* Gräfin von Wildenau —*alias*—*alias* God knows what——"

"Don't!" The word, choked in her throat, was scarcely audible, without the gesture of her hand would have been nothing.

"*Alias* Marchesa this—Contessa that," he continued, inexorably, "*alias* Contessa Felice Moragnano-Triconopoli di Serrato—my congratulations on a pretty taste in titles! German spy in Russia, France, and England from 1910 to 1915." Strange how the details of that terrible indictment came back automatically to him, as though indelibly imprinted on his brain! "Spy in Italy from 1915 to 1917. Fled to South America in 1917. Is that correct?"

Her eyes were still fixed on him. She got a sound out through her pallid lips.

"Yes."

THE cynicism of her avowal, forced though it was, sent a surge of madness to his brain. He controlled himself with an effort.

"And since that date? Perhaps you would like to give me the rest of the *dossier*?"

She remained silent.

"You would rather not?"

She moved her head speechlessly.

"Then one word—*truthfully*, if you can" —his sneer was deadly in its cold emphasis— "Durati was shot in 1916, and God knows what you have been doing since. Are you legally my wife?"

The mask of her face twitched.

"Yes." She pronounced the one word from an internal agony he could read in her fixed eyes.

"Thank you." He drew a silver-plated revolver from his pocket, saw her eyes go to the gleam of it. "You have left nothing out, I think. You made my dishonour quite complete."

She drew a deep breath, her eyes still on the revolver, then looked at him. A strange expression came into her face, an expression that was not fear.

"You are going to——?" There was nothing of protest in the breathless question she left unfinished. He could almost have believed that she accepted the penalty. Her voice had come more easily, tense though was the rigidity of her body.

"Yes." His answer was curtly succinct. "I am going to shoot you first—and afterwards myself."

A spasm of alarm traversed her like an electric shock. She jerked out both arms, arrested the gesture as though conscious she might not touch him.

"Geoffrey—*not yourself!*"

"Both of us." His reply was grimly categorical. "But, before that, you are going to sit down at that desk and write out a confession—a Divorce Court confession."

The sudden horror in her face surprised him.

"No, no, Geoffrey! Not that! I don't mind dying—I don't want you to shoot me. I'll kill myself. I will write anything you like—but not that! Not that! It's not true. I can't die with that lie left behind me! It's too cruel!"

The protest burst from her in a passionate rush of words, from a heaving chest, her eyes eloquent of a distress that puzzled him.

"You are unduly discriminating in your use of lies," he said, through his clenched teeth. "One more or less doesn't matter. It may be true for aught I know. And I don't even care." She wilted as though under a blow from a whip. "But you are going to write it. I have a particular reason for wishing to keep the precise form of my dishonour a secret known to no one in the world but you and me."

She stared at him.

"To no one in the world——?" she said, slowly, as though trying to readjust her ideas to something that surprised her. "*Geoffrey!*" She searched his face. "Ardnassy did not tell you, then?"

"Ardnassy?" He was frankly startled. "*He* knows, then, does he?" A suspicion flashed through him in a lurid illumination. "He's another of your precious gang, I suppose? And that woman you've been imposing on me as your mother——?"

She gestured a miserable abandonment of all pretence.

"Yes."

He groaned.

"My God! I'm surrounded with this vileness! And I can't even keep it hidden!"

They stood staring at one another in a tense silence. On her face came a pity for his anguish. Suddenly his brain began to work. There was something more in all this than he had imagined, something he must unriddle before—before the climax implied in the weapon heavy in his hand.

"Why did you think Ardnassy had told me?" he asked, sharply.

"He threatened to, this morning."

"To tell *me?*"

"To denounce me to the authorities." She was obviously speaking the truth. "Geoffrey! *Geoffrey!* Listen to me! I don't want to—to alter anything. There is nothing for me but death, I know—you cannot love me any more—I want, *I want* so desperately to die! But, Geoffrey—Geoffrey dear!"—the appeal was a cry from her heart, poignant in its sincerity—"I

don't want to die before you hear the truth—I don't want to die leaving you to think I had betrayed you——"

"You did not betray me?" he said, in bitter scorn. "You did not give Scheme B to that fellow who broke his neck yesterday?"

"Scheme B—yes—I had to give something"—she spoke rapidly, breathlessly, eager to hold his attention—"but Scheme B was cancelled—you know it was cancelled—Geoffrey, listen to me!"

"Go on!"

"Let me sit down. I—I can't stand any more. I am faint." She passed a hand over her brow, over the face still beautiful despite the suffering that paled it. "I'll tell you—everything." She went, shakily, to a lounge chair, subsided in it, gripping the arms with tense white fingers as she turned her face to him. "I don't know how you found out, if Ardnassy did not tell you—but it is true, all you said, all true. I was married to Durati in 1909. I did not know what he was when I married him—believe me, Geoffrey, I did not know! After that—how can I make you understand? Once you get in the grip of those people you have to go on. There is no escape. You get your orders and they see you carry them out—that's what that woman is always with me for—Marta—the woman I said was my mother—to watch me—to see I did not play them false."

"And they ordered you to marry me—as a likely source of information?" he said, bitterly.

"No. I know you won't believe me, Geoffrey—I can see it in your face—but it's true. I—I loved you, Geoffrey, from your first word to me. I knew I hadn't the right to love an honest man, but"—her deep contralto voice was vibrant with a fought-back emotion—"I—I hadn't the strength to refuse you when—when you asked. I had to get permission to marry you. They gave it on condition that Marta lived with me, on condition that——" She broke off, her hand to her throat.

"On condition that you betrayed me?"

She swallowed, nodded.

He frowned.

"And who are 'they'? What country were you working for? To what country were you sending Scheme B?" he asked, harshly.

"I do not know. Before the Armistice it was Germany. Since then the people at the top have worked for anyone who would pay them—all sorts of countries. I don't know who those people are nor where they have their headquarters. I don't know anything of them—the system has always been arranged so that even the most important agents know only the man immediately above them. I took my orders from Ardnassy—I don't even know his real name—he was No. 7 to me, as I was No. 15—and sent my information to him. Marta reported direct to him also—she was attached to me to watch me even before I met you. They—they knew I wanted to escape from a life I loathed."

"Yet—after you had married me—you continued to obey their orders," he said, with no attenuation of his sternness.

"No. I pretended to. Geoffrey, you don't know the life I've lived these six months. They kept me under a constant terror—for Marta knew—knew that you were everything to me. She reads me like a book. Ardnassy knew too, of course. They played on it, torturing me with the threat of letting you know who I was. And to satisfy them—to keep you—I fed them with information that was false from beginning to end, week after week and month after month. I knew the kind of thing they wanted. I invented it." A wry smile came on her beautiful face. "There are some wonderful stories filed away somewhere. And then they found out you were on that Committee. They insisted that I should give them the Scheme. I refused at first, said it was impossible. They insisted—threatened me, terrified me. I had to give way. Yesterday afternoon, when you had left your papers locked in the safe, I got at them. It was Marta who had had a duplicate key made—she put it into my hand. And then I found Scheme B—cancelled. I knew it was worthless. I copied it, gave it to Ardnassy—Geoffrey!" Her face yearned up to him as he stood over her. "That is the truth! Believe me—I don't expect you to love me any more, but believe me!—that is the whole wretched truth!—I can die now that you know it."

HE had listened with a coldly grim attention, armoured against the beauty of her, armoured against the poignant emotion that quivered in her speech, armoured against everything except the pathetic simplicity of her last words. He crushed down the momentary weakness.

"But you say that this morning Ardnassy threatened to denounce you?"

"Yes. They had found me out—had been checking my information. It was bound to happen sooner or later. Ardnassy came to tax me with it. I admitted it—he pushed me against the wall, goaded me until at last I more than confessed—I gloried in it, jeered at him. I knew what would happen without his telling me—these six months I have seen it getting nearer every day, every day that I have loved you"—her voice caught, her hands twitched on the

arms of the chair—" more and more until life was worth less than nothing without you. I knew he would denounce me—he may not have done it yet—but he will. And now I don't care! You have listened. You *know*—you know that I have never betrayed you—that I would rather die than betray you." She paused, sat looking up at him with liquid eyes, true if ever woman's eyes were true. " Geoffrey!—you'll let me go along now, won't you?—I've made up my mind for it. I knew it would come. And now "—she checked—" now there's nothing more to wait for. It's time it finished."

With a quick movement, so sudden as to take him off his guard, she sprang up from the chair, snatched the revolver from his hand. He saw it go up to her head. Thought stopped in him. He was conscious only of an atrocious pang of apprehension that came from the roots of him. He threw himself on her, caught her wrist before the bright weapon could point into the golden glory of her hair. For a moment they stood locked, strength against strength, while their faces looked close into each other.

" Felice!" he gasped. " Felice! For God's sake!" It seemed to him another self that was speaking, a self that recked of nothing but the continued existence of her who for six months had been life itself to him.

She smiled suddenly, a strange exalted smile, her eyes shining into his.

" One kiss, Geoffrey! The last—before I go!" With the words she pressed her lips to his, kissed him passionately, almost fiercely, in a long ecstasy where he could feel the strong throbbing of her heart.

He gasped when at last she withdrew her lips, fought still for the weapon as her wrist writhed in his clutch. To himself it seemed that he was mad, taken possession of by wild, deep-surging forces beyond his control.

" Felice! Felice! Listen to me! You sha'n't do it! Neither of us shall do it! I love you—God forgive me, I love you more than ever I did!"

She released herself from him, stood back a step, the half-lowered revolver still in her hand, contemplated him as though incredulous of comprehension.

" You—you love me—still?" she breathed rather than spoke.

He nodded, at a difficulty for speech, calmer now, but definitely metamorphosed in that instant of awful apprehension. It seemed to him that he had found his real self, a self suddenly cognizant of the ultimate values behind the shows of circumstance.

" I don't care what you were. You've wiped it out—more than wiped it out. I only know what you *are*. And I don't feel worth you. Put that thing down. We're going to live, both of us—somehow. I'm going to make it up to you—give you my life. And you're going to be happy."

She stared at him, did not move. Then she shook her head.

" No. It is not possible. Ardnassy will surely denounce me."

HE checked. Ardnassy! The Chief would know after all! In any case, he was going to resign, that was determined in the flash of thought when he had spoken the words which had lowered the revolver, but on some plausible pretext that should elude suspicion. Ardnassy! Perhaps there was yet time—the man might not yet have spoken—he might be able to buy his silence—to buy the silence of that woman also! His brain worked quickly. That was the way! He would buy her out of slavery—free her for ever—and they would go and live somewhere abroad, forgetting all this, forgetting everything except her perilous loyalty to him!

She stood watching his face.

" We must find Ardnassy at once!" he said, rapidly decisive. " Perhaps he has said nothing yet. He can be bought. And that woman, too—send for her!"

She looked at him, as though measuring the full sincerity of his intention, went slowly across to the bell, pressed it.

A maid appeared.

" Give my compliments to the Baronessa and ask her to come here," he said, keeping down the sharpness of his tone with an effort.

The maid looked at him in surprise.

" The Baronessa packed her trunks and went away in a taxi an hour ago," she said. " I thought Madame knew."

He exchanged a swift glance with his wife, dismissed the maid with a feigned astonishment that the Baronessa should have " already " started.

The two looked at one another.

" She's gone!" she said. There was fright in her eyes.

" Ominous!" he agreed. " But perhaps there's still time to telephone Ardnassy and silence him."

There was a tap at the door. It was the maid again. She held out a couple of cards on a salver.

" Two gentlemen to see you, sir."

He picked up the cards, glanced at them. Then he looked at Felice. She still held the revolver, dissimulated it from the eyes of the maid against a fold of her skirt. He dared not leave her. Left alone, she might yet——

" Show the gentlemen up here," he said.

The maid departed.

"Who are they?" she asked.

"The Chief and Anson," he replied, grimly, throwing the two cards down upon the table. "Ardnassy has spoken."

She went up to him, clutched his arm.

"Geoffrey!" she said. "Go downstairs to them!"

He probed her with a look, read her intention in her eyes.

"No," he replied, through his teeth. "Wait. This is finish after all. Our hands are forced. But we should have had to do it in any case. We couldn't have lived like that—hiding from ourselves."

She met his eyes with the question in her own.

He nodded.

"After they've gone. Since they know so much, I want them to know all. And then—it's finish—for both of us, if you're ready to go together."

"*Together!*" She murmured the word in a kind of ecstasy. "Oh, Geoffrey, I have sometimes prayed for it in my nights of agony. Perhaps the next life will be kinder——"

They waited, listening for the approach of carpet-muffled footsteps up the stairs.

The maid re-opened the door. The Chief entered, Anson behind him. Even Anson's round, comedian-like face had gone serious; the Chief was plainly troubled and anxious, the fine features of that countenance with the pointed little grey beard pale like those of a man under the shock of bad news. They glanced at the woman standing immobile, the full light of

For a moment they stood locked, strength against strength, while their faces looked close into each other.

the window upon her beauty, glanced swiftly, significantly, at each other. The Chief went forward to Wayneflete, motionless also.

"Wayneflete," he said, "you can guess why we've come. I refused to believe it when Anson told me—but——" He gestured towards the woman and his gesture finished for him. He looked the younger man probingly in the eyes. "I'm sorry for you." There was a requiem in his tone.

Wayneflete's jaw set hard.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "There's just one thing I'd like you to know. Until I saw that photograph at the Committee to-day, I had no idea of it."

"Yet you denied——?"

"Had it been your wife, sir, would you have blurted it out at that table? There are some things a man must settle for himself."

The old man contemplated him for a moment.

"Yes," he said, at last. "I suppose so. In your place—which God forbid—I should have done the same." He turned to look with curiosity at the woman who had ruined the most promising of his subordinates.

Anson came forward.

"There's one little point, Wayneflete, that's baffling me," he said, "if you wouldn't mind explaining it. Why was Scheme B and not Scheme C—the real one—given to that fellow?"

"That is what I want you and the Chief to know," replied Wayneflete, quietly. He looked towards his superior. "Would you listen for a few minutes, sir? It's the only favour I ask of you."

"Certainly." The Chief spoke with the awkward kindness one shows towards a man condemned. "I'll sit down, if I may. Sit you down, Anson."

Wayneflete looked towards his wife.

"Felice," he said. "Tell them — the whole story."

SHE told them. They sat, their eyes fixed on her beautiful face, listened as, in a low, tense voice, but succinctly, clearly, without extenuation, she told her story. Only once was she interrupted—by Anson's ejaculation of "That was the fellow who telephoned me, then!" as she told of Ardnassy's threat. When she had finished, the Chief leaned forward, quietly took the revolver from the hand which held it hidden behind her skirt.

"You won't need this," he said, "either of you." And he looked significantly at Wayneflete.

Before the young man could utter a word, there was the sound of a motor-car skidding under its brakes as it drew up outside—and Anson had sprung to the window.

"That's my man, I'll bet my life!" he exclaimed. "Your friend Ardnassy, I think, Mrs. Wayneflete—unless I'm much mistaken."

"Ardnassy!" ejaculated Wayneflete. "But surely he wouldn't come here——!"

"Not of his own free will," grinned Anson, half-turning from the window. "But I was naturally curious to have a look at the anonymous gentleman possessed of such interesting information. The man who telephones is lost—if you're quick enough and have two lines." He grinned again. "I'll explain later. But it occurred to me that if I had him brought here there might be something to be learned from a confrontation with the person he was so anxious to denounce." He threw up the window, shouted down from it: "That's right. Bring him up here."

A couple of minutes later, Count Ardnassy, pale and spluttering, was marched into the room by a couple of plain-clothes detectives. He burst out in fury when he saw the group.

"I protest against this outrage!" he shouted. "You can't do this sort of thing! It is against the law!"

Anson went forward, smiling pleasantly.

"You shall have the law—never fear, Mr.—Mr. Schürzheim, isn't it?—or is that merely an *alias* also?"

A swift terror came into the man's eyes, subsided. He smiled insolently.

"All right," he said, "I give in. But you can only deport me. This isn't war-time."

"Quite, Mr. Schürzheim," agreed Anson, still in his pleasant voice, "but even a peace-time British jury is competent to deal with the gentleman who murdered one of my favourite men in the train from Paddington to Fishguard on April 7th, 1918. We've got you taped out, my friend, never fear. You'll swing all right—after, no doubt, a very interesting fair trial."

Ardnassy stared at him, gasped.

"Take him out," said Anson. "I've learned all I want."

The pallid wretch was marched out, disappeared through the door. They heard the three men stumbling down the stairs. Suddenly there was a shout from below. Anson listened for a moment—dashed out after them.

The other three waited, in a tense silence none felt inclined to break.

After a few minutes Anson reappeared. He made a significant gesture. "Poison," he said. "He was too quick for them. I've had him taken off." He smiled grimly. "Well—excepting a certain lady named

"I protest against this outrage!" he shouted. "It is against the law!"

Marta Rugini, whom we caught in a taxi-cab this morning and who is going to serve a life sentence for another little murder—that disposes of No. 7, the only person, if I know anything of the system—who had any knowledge of Mrs. Wayneflete as anything but—Mrs. Wayneflete."

The Chief turned to his subordinate.

"Wayneflete," he said, gravely, "when I was a young man I heard a text that stuck in my mind. 'The fining pot is for silve and the furnace for gold, but God triet hearts.' So long as the metal comes ou true, we can but be satisfied and not questio the sometimes difficult wisdom of His pro cess. I shall expect you at the Committe to-morrow."

He turned to the woman, held out hi hand.

"Mrs. Wayneflete," he said, "forget!"

FORTY YEARS OF SONG

BY

BEN DAVIES

I WAS leaving the golf links at Sheringham, where I have a house, one day, when I heard hurried footsteps behind me. I turned to find an old lady, who, almost out of breath, said: "Excuse me, sir, but my little boy is *so* anxious to know whether you are the famous Mr. Ben Davies."

"Famous!" exclaimed a caddie who had overheard her question. "He's not famous; he's twenty-four" (apparently meaning my golf handicap).

"Then perhaps I am mistaken," said the lady, "for I thought Mr. Davies, the well-known tenor, was much older than that."

Such is fame. It stabilizes one, so to speak, to reflect that after a concert and operatic career of over forty years there are still rude caddies who know little about musical achievements, but a good deal about one's golfing skill.

Forty years of song! It is a long time, as musical careers go, and yet, crowded as it is with memories—most of them happy, some, perhaps, a little sad, but all remarkable—it seems too short. My mind goes back to the village choir in which I first sang, to hard studies at the Royal Academy of Music, to my associations with the world's greatest singers and conductors, to numerous meetings with kings and queens, princes and princesses, to the houses of the great in Mayfair, to America, Germany, South Africa, Australia—the task, indeed, of sorting out experiences so far-flung and varied seems overwhelming.

How has it all come about? I attribute whatever success I have had to several causes. First, I found myself—much to my surprise, I may say—in possession of a good voice. Second, I had the advantage of excellent advice at a critical period of my career. Third, I have worked hard and long to bring my voice to what it is.

A conversation I had with Madame Patti, probably the greatest soprano of her time, will illustrate the vital importance of this matter of early training. She informed me, when I asked her how she produced her voice so wonderfully, that she really did not know what she did while in the act of singing; she simply did what she had been taught to do when very young, and it had become second nature.

When I told her that I had observed that as she passed from D to E she bent her head forward a little—a well-known rule in vocal technique—she replied that she was not aware of it. The next evening, however, she exclaimed to me: "I took special notice in my last song, and you are quite right." Her mastery of these points was undoubtedly one of the principal causes of her success.

IT was not until I was nearly twenty years old that I discovered that I had a voice. True, I was, at the age of seven, singing alto in the choir of Cwmburla Congregational Chapel, near Swansea, but no one took any particular notice of me. At fourteen I sang with the South Wales Choral Union, a remarkably fine choir of five hundred voices, when they won a thousand-guinea challenge cup at the Crystal Palace, and I never thought that day that I should become the principal tenor at all the Handel Festivals at the Palace for over thirty years.

After that contest my voice broke, and I am always grateful for the advice then given to me by a Swansea man. "Don't sing again for a few years," he said. I acted on that advice, and began to get on with the business of life generally, for I had no father and it was necessary to earn a living.

At nineteen I competed in a local Eisteddfod and startled everybody by winning the first prize. My mother, I remember, would not believe the news until I showed her what I had won. Encouraged by the compliments of the adjudicators, I consulted Mr. Brinley Richards, a well-known musician, who, after hearing me sing, said: "Go to London at once and place yourself in the hands of first-class professors."

I am afraid my mother was not particularly pleased, for she had always dreamed that I should one day be a preacher. Besides, in those days the profession of singing was not quite so "respectable," shall we say, as it is now. I recall that years afterwards, when I first appeared on the stage in "Carmen," she was shocked. All the same, she came to the theatre—it was in Liverpool—to hear me, and at the close of the performance, while everybody was rapturously applauding, she impressively rose in her seat and bowed. She became completely reconciled later when she heard that I had been singing "Comfort Ye" and "Every Valley," which was described by the newspapers as the finest sermon preached in London that day.

In three months after my interview with Mr. Richards, I duly became a student at the Royal Academy of Music. I drew on my savings for my expenses, and I also received help from an uncle. Unfortunately, he died a year later, but meanwhile I had made a good friend in Professor Randegger, an Academy tutor, and he went out of his way to obtain engagements for me, particularly when term fees were due.

I was lucky enough, also, to form an early friendship with Goring Thomas, one of the most promising operatic composers of his day, who was just finishing his studies. He had written a little opera called "Nourmahal," and he asked me and a few others to sing the music to Carl Rosa. As a result of that, Thomas was commissioned to write the opera "Esmeralda," in which I played.

Soon afterwards I became a member of the Carl Rosa Opera Company proper, and, for good or ill, I was launched on my career as a singer. I quickly came in contact with many famous people. It was there that I met my wife, Clara Perry, then a *prima donna*, and I also sang with Georgina Burns, Julia Gaylord, Barton McGuckin, J. W. Turner (who later started a company of his own), and many others.

After three years with Carl Rosa I appeared

"Excuse me, sir, but my little boy is anxious to know whether you are the famous Mr. Ben Davies."

in "Dorothy," and this eventually led to my association with Sir Arthur Sullivan, who was shortly to produce his first and only grand opera, "Ivanhoe." My singing in "Dorothy" had evidently impressed him, for he wrote me a very flattering letter of invitation to appear in his new production, which was put on at the Royal English Opera House (now the Palace Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue) in 1891.

Sullivan became, of course, the most popular composer of his day. He was helped greatly, no doubt, by the success of that favourite song, "The Lost Chord." It seems strange to reflect that this song was originally offered to Madame Patey, the famous contralto, who was by no means impressed with it, and declined to sing it. Madame Antoinette Sterling took it up, and it quickly became the rage.

Howard Reynolds, the famous cornet soloist, often played it. John Solomon, our greatest trumpet-player, told me that Reynolds was greatly perturbed by the silence which followed his first rendering of "The Lost Chord" in a church. "Do you know," he said, "I played that song as I never played it before, and not a single bit of applause did I get!"

"Ivanhoe" was practically my last experience of opera, for I decided to turn my attention to the concert platform. Exceedingly happy are the memories of the numerous celebrated people I met there, men and women whose names are household words the world over. The great Sims Reeves was in his prime then. I regard him as one of the finest tenors we have ever produced, and he was also one of the most elusive.

In my student days I had to go no fewer than seven times to a hall at which he was advertised to appear before I at last heard him. Reports went round that the reason he so frequently disappointed his audiences was that he was of intemperate habits. That was quite untrue. Sims Reeves was first and last an artist, and if, on the morning of a concert, he did not feel up to the mark, he would refuse to sing.

I am afraid his wife encouraged him in that attitude. I often experience a similar feeling, but I have been blessed with a wife who persuades me that I am not half so bad as I pretend, and somehow everything comes right.

Reeves was most kind to me. Occasionally I visited him at his house, when he would show me how to sing certain oratorio music. To this day, when I sing such pieces as "Deeper and Deeper Still" (Handel) and "Total Eclipse," from "Samson," I have ringing in my ears the beautiful renderings that my great predecessor would have given of them.

THERE is a fine spirit of camaraderie among vocalists. I remember with grateful feelings the valuable hints given to me by the famous Jean de Reszke. He first heard me sing in a private house in New York. At the close he warmly embraced me. "You have a beautiful voice," he said, and added that he would be happy to see me when he came to London. I afterwards became very friendly with him, and he often sang to me and showed me how to improve my methods.

I shall never forget Charles Santley, if only because he was indirectly concerned in a rather amusing experience I had. Asked by Mr. Joseph Robinson, conductor of the Dublin Choral Society, to recommend a tenor to sing in Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," Santley was good enough to mention my name. When I arrived in Dublin on the morning of the rehearsal, I made my way to Mr. Robinson's house, opposite to which, as luck would have it, a German band was making its characteristic strange noises.

On knocking at the door I was greeted by angry cries of "Go away," which proceeded from inside. I knocked again. "Will you go away?" someone shouted, still more angrily. "Nothing like persevering," I thought, and I knocked once more. This time the door was opened by Robinson himself, looking ready to hurl me from the step.

"Are you Mr. Robinson?" I inquired. "I'm the tenor."

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed. "I thought you were the infernal conductor of that confounded band. Come in and let's see what you're made of." I went inside and sang to him, upon which he said "You'll do." When at the rehearsal the orchestra showed their appreciation of my singing by applauding me, he remarked to the players: "This, gentlemen, is the man I mistook for a German bandmaster." He warmed to me after that, and I sang for him in several successive years.

When I wanted to thank Santley for his kindness, he observed in his usual matter-of-fact way that he had forgotten all about it. "But it was all right, wasn't it?" he added. "Nothing to complain of, have you? Whatever I did, you deserved." That was Santley, a bluff, sensible sort of man, with no use for what might be called the trimmings of life. As a singer, I doubt whether he has ever been excelled in this country—at all events, in his own line.

But he had no great fondness for Wagner, holding the opinion that the music made altogether excessive demands on the voice,

and, in a comparatively short time, would probably ruin it. I am in full agreement with him. Many years ago, during one of my thirteen tours of America, I appeared in Wagner selections under the conductorship of Herr Seidel, who came from the composer's home, Bayreuth. After I had sung he said: "That is how this music should be rendered. Wagner would have loved to have heard you to-day." He wanted me to continue this kind of work, and so, also, did Augustus Harris later on when he heard me sing in England.

I am certain that if I had yielded, instead of my voice being in the condition it is to-day, it would have been worn out in five years. I had no fears except for my voice. One of America's greatest conductors, Mr. Theodor Thomas, at whose concerts I appeared frequently, once asked me to sing Wagner in German. I immediately agreed. "That Davies fellow—he's a brick. He'll do anything," he said. And so I would—within reason.

An early portrait of Mr. Ben Davies with his wife.

Photo. Ellis & Walery.

One of the most popular figures on our concert platforms a few years ago was Madame Albani. I think her chief characteristic was the extraordinary devotion with which she sang sacred music, and she will also be remembered for that quaint way she had of "entering." Running with short, quick steps, she extended her arms wide as if to embrace her audience, all the time beaming upon them with a smile of exquisite delight, for she was a woman of rare charm. At the end of her song she repeated a similar kind of movement as she made her exit.

Probably her quaint mannerisms helped to endear her to the public. She seemed to put them in a good humour and keep them there. I am sure she must have been disappointed at a Northern concert at which we both appeared to find that the platform was so small for the large orchestra seated upon it that there was simply no room for her to dance on and off, as was her custom. And, strange to say, she did not get her usual tornado of applause.

Audiences are undoubtedly influenced by an artiste's personality, or lack of it. My wife, sitting behind two somewhat garrulous ladies at one of my concerts, quite unintentionally heard one say to the other: "I do like Mr. Davies. He always looks as if he had had a good dinner—so happy and contented, you know." Well, I always feel happy and contented, but I would remark that when I am going to sing I do not have dinner. It only shows how deceptive appearances are, although the incident is illuminating.

Clara Butt is a striking instance of a singer possessing a pleasant platform style, and I happen to know that she is not without a sense of humour. I suppose it is no secret by now that we both have certain physical claims to distinction, apart from any vocal talent we may have. On her side is length; on mine, breadth. So much so that I ventured some time ago to send her my photograph endorsed: "From the broadest of his sex." Back, in quick time, came a photograph of herself signed: "From the longest of hers."

I am happy to recall that I sang at Clara Butt's first concert. I formed the opinion then that she would become famous. She has the finest contralto voice I ever heard.

Many musical celebrities I met at Bucking-

ham Palace. Of all the memories that I delight to dwell upon in these later years of my life, none give me greater pleasure than those of the numerous occasions upon which I sang to the Royal Family. A singer does not, of course, receive fees on these occasions, but I treasure to-day many valuable gifts which have been showered upon me, and, even more, the remembrance of the wonderful charm of the Royal circle.

It was through Signor Tosti, the well-known composer of "Good-Bye," that I first came to sing for Queen Victoria, for although Tosti was not officially connected with the Court, he always arranged the private concerts. But Her Majesty took a close interest in everything. A thorough musician herself, she would go through one's music and carefully choose what she would like to hear. She was particularly fond of "Salve! Dimora," from "Faust," and "Songs of Araby." Later she acquired a partiality for "Come, Marguerita, Come," from "The Martyr of Antioch."

The aged Queen was graciousness itself after I had sung my first songs to her. "How beautifully you sing!" she said. "It is a real pleasure to hear you. What part of the country do you come from? You are Welsh, are you not?" I replied that I was, whereupon Her Majesty remarked: "Ah, there are some beautiful voices in Wales. I hope you will come again."

I paid another visit to Buckingham Palace within a fortnight, and many a time afterwards. On one occasion when the Queen wished me to sing, a message was conveyed to her that I was in America. Two days before I was due back, she sent a magnificent gold watch to await my return.

Sometimes I went to Windsor Castle. When I reached the Castle one day, in obedience to a command, I was met by a surprised official, who exclaimed: "Haven't you received our telegram? Madame Calvé is ill, and the concert has been postponed." I replied that I had not received the message. But when the Queen heard that I had arrived she insisted on my remaining to lunch, after which I sang for over an hour and a half. I gave her one or two songs she had not heard previously, which led her to ask: "Why have you not sung these before?" She expressed her regret when I explained that they had always been included in those she had looked through.

While the Empress Frederick, mother of the ex-Kaiser of Germany, was over on a visit, the Queen presented me to her. She did not, I observed, say: "This is the Empress of Germany," but "My daughter." The Empress turned to me and said: "I have heard about you from my daughter, whose castle is near Bonn. She told me you sang something that sounded like 'Wafting Angels,' and she admired it very greatly." I replied that the song was Handel's "Waft her, Angels," and that I was exceedingly sorry I had been unable to accept her daughter's invitation to sing at her castle, as I had to leave the town to fulfil another urgent engagement.

Queen Victoria, who had been an interested listener to the conversation, interposed with: "You have not sung that to me?" Again I explained that it had been included with my other songs, and that Her Majesty must have overlooked it.

ONE of the most remarkable concerts I ever took part in was one given by H.R.H. Princess Mary of Teck, mother of our present Queen. I had been singing at a private musical party a short time previously when the Princess arrived—too late to hear me. She expressed her great regret and said she had looked forward to hearing me sing. I told her that I also was exceedingly disappointed that she had not been present.

A few weeks later she gave a birthday party to which only Royalty was invited. The guests included the then Prince of Wales, the Duke of York (now King George), the Duke of Edinburgh, Princess May, and several other Royal personages. I felt particularly honoured because I was the only singer present.

King Edward was also an admirer of music. His taste was chiefly for tuneful melodies. He was a man of considerable charm and bonhomie, and had the happy faculty of quickly making one feel at home.

It was his duty to take the place of Queen Victoria at the State concerts which were formerly given at Buckingham Palace. These were affairs of gorgeous splendour. Everybody of note was there—princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, Cabinet Ministers and their wives, Ambassadors, distinguished Court officials. As full dress was worn, the glitter and dazzle of the scene may be imagined. What a singer always noticed, and almost felt, was the silence. Applause was taboo on these occasions, with the result that one had a feeling that an apology was due for daring to sing. Sir Arthur Sullivan conducted one of the concerts, and it is to his credit that only English artistes were selected.

Unfortunately, these functions are now things of the past, as also are the private concerts which were once fairly frequent in Mayfair. The greatest singers in the world used to appear at these, and very high fees, sometimes running into thousands of pounds, were paid by hostesses anxious to outdo one another. Many and many a

time I figured in the programmes, with substantial benefit to myself.

Things have changed in the musical world, as in every other. One might instance the conductor, who has come to the front, so to speak, a good deal. The tendency began with the famous Dr. Richter, and it fell to me to have a somewhat amusing experience of it. Richter asked me to sing in the first act of "The Valkyrie," and I agreed. After I had sung, the audience applauded me in a most flattering way, and the doctor shouted: "Bravo, bravo, Davies! Splendid!" A short time later, when invited to sing at a repetition performance, I pointed out that I had not been paid for my previous services.

"But we do not pay singers," his agent coolly replied. "Then I am sorry I cannot appear," I said. Eventually it was agreed that I should be paid, but at the concert, although I sang as well as before, Richter's enthusiasm was noticeably less. A third concert was arranged, and again I was asked to appear. I consented, and at the same time raised my terms. I am afraid I had forfeited all the doctor's affection by now, for he gave me neither "bravos" nor applause when I actually sang.

His theory, of course, was that he was the real "lion" of these occasions, and as such was entitled to all the financial rewards.

Mr. Ben Davies as Geoffrey Wilder in "Dorothy."

Undoubtedly Richter was a great conductor of Wagner and Beethoven. But he had little talent for Handel's music and the music of the French school. He was very heavy in the "Messiah"—so much so that I once took the liberty of quickening the *tempo* myself at a certain point at which I had to sing without the orchestra. He was delighted.

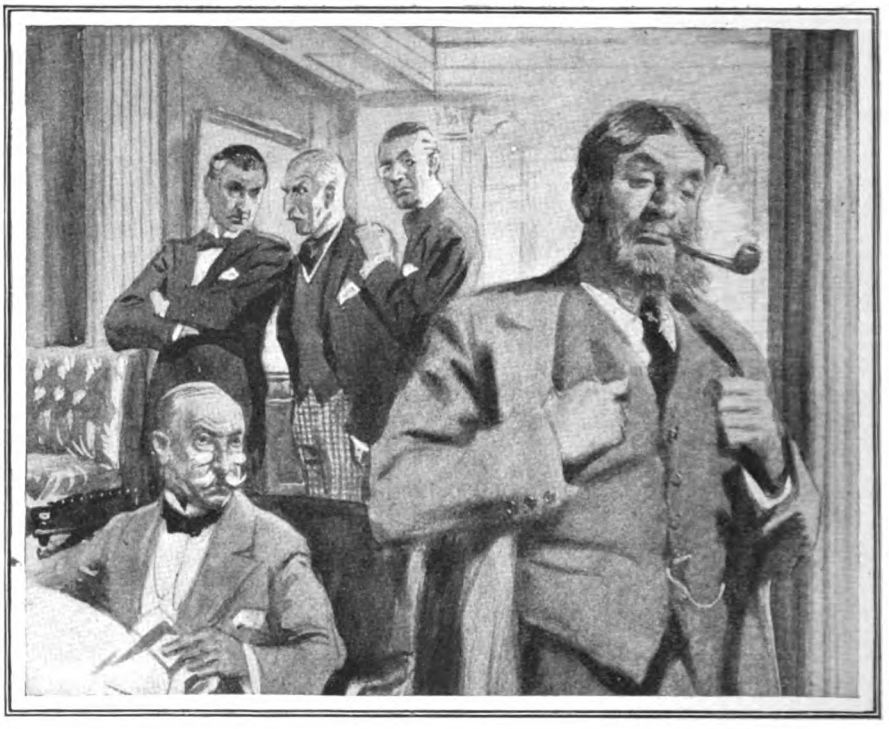
"*Ach so, ach so,*" he said to me under his breath as I sang, at the same time nodding vigorously in approval. He told me afterwards that he did not know "this 'Messiah' stuff."

Another change which has taken place concerns the musical taste of the public, which, I consider, has improved. I wish I could say the same of singing itself. Perhaps the principal reason of this failure of the vocal art to advance is the lack of suitable music. Compositions of the present day do not call for scale singing or the sostenuto style—the art of sustaining the voice. I would not have our composers return to the banalities of the Victorian period, but they would find it of great benefit to study the voice and what it is capable of.

No good songs for tenors are being written nowadays. Those that are available lack the melodic line, or what singers call good singing phrases, such as one finds in, say, "Songs of Araby," which is purely vocal, and yet has an accompaniment of perfect balance.

If I may, in conclusion, venture to give a word of advice to young singers, it is to find out how to sing on the interest of their voices instead of on the capital. The fact that, at the age of sixty-five, I am, in the opinion of the public and the critics, singing as well as ever is the result of following that principle from the beginning of my career. I often find that the point is overlooked in these days, but it is of the greatest importance all the same.

Forty glorious years of song! What a pity life has no encores!



THE NEW MEMBER

BY

HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

I.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

CHARRINGTON was a popular member of the famous Gridiron Club, and one of the pillars and pillers of the committee. The Grid is a pilling club, but eminent men in many walks of life have testified that it's no disgrace to be pilled. Rank, position, money are shadowy qualifications for membership. One question is put: "Is HE a clubbable fellow?" At the Grid there are no small tables in the dining-room, no sanctuaries for silence and snooze. All Gridites know and greet each other with the pleasant familiarity of officers in a smart mess. Indeed, the Gridites insist that theirs is the only really clubbable club in London, because pilling happens to be practised very drastically.

Charrington proposed and secured the election of Sir James Pont. Pont's seconder, Dolly Treherne, another popular member, wrote the usual letter to the committee affirming that Pont, in his opinion, would be an asset to the Club. The committee elected Pont unanimously because, with the exception of Charrington, not one of that august body had ever met or heard of Pont. Charrington said to the Chairman: "Jim Pont is one of the best; he rides straight to hounds; he's a good shot, a thorough sportsman, and a quick-witted gentleman of the old school."

"And a particular pal of yours, Char?" asked the Chairman.

Copyright, 1924, by H. A. Vachell.

"Known dear old Jim all my life."

"Why don't some of us know him?"

"Simply because he lives in Cornwall, and does his duty as a many-acred squire."

That sufficed.

II.

THE new member presented himself at the Grid shortly after election, and was denied admittance by the vigilant hall-porter, inasmuch as the Club does not open its slightly inhospitable doors till one. The hall-porter added:—

"There are no members in the Club, sir; perhaps you are not aware that strangers are never entertained here."

"Come off it—I'm a m-m-member."

The hall-porter winced. He saw before him a big man, wearing a rough frieze overcoat and a soft felt hat. Under the brim of the hat twinkled a pair of eyes. The rest of the face seemed to be covered with hair.

"A n-n-new m-m-member. Here is my c-c-card."

Cerberus took the card, read what was inscribed upon it, and said in a more friendly tone:—

"I beg your pardon, Sir James. It is ten minutes to one. If you will be good enough to step upstairs I will ask the steward to show you the Club."

The steward, disguising successfully his astonishment, did the honours with practised grace.

The new member surveyed the premises and nodded approvingly.

"C-c-cosy little p-p-pothouse, what?"

The steward gazed piercingly at the new member. Never in the history of THE CLUB—there was no other like it in his considered judgment—had it been stigmatized as a pothouse! To mask lacerated feelings, he said, stiffly:—

"You are lunching here, Sir James?"

"Of c-c-course. Did ye think I dropped in to b-b-black my b-b-boots?"

"Shall I order a cocktail?"

"P-p-please. A gin and vermouth—d-d-dry g-gin, and d-dry vermouth s-s-slipped through the ice."

A waiter hung the new member's hat and coat upon a peg. He told the man who mixes the best cocktails in clubland that Robinson Crusoe had joined the Grid, adding humorously:—

"But where, oh where, is his man—Friday?"

Before the cocktail was mixed, upon the tick of one, a second member, the Chairman, ascended the stairs, and was greeted deferentially by the steward.

"Sir James Pont, my lord, is in the Club."

"Who——"

"Sir James Pont, the new member."

My lord nodded and smiled, as he bespoke a thick steak and fried onions. As an intimate friend of Charrington, he was prepared to welcome handsomely the new member. The Grid possesses one immense room which serves as dining-room and sitting-room. The grill adjoins it. According to ancient custom all Club servants are addressed as "Fred." When you say "Fred" in a low clear voice, an acolyte is at your elbow in a jiffy.

My lord ejaculated: "Fred!"

"Yes, my lord?"

Quite forgetting that he was addressing a Club servant, Lord Exminster went on: "The new member is a king beaver!"

"Pardon me, my lord, his beard is not red."

"You are right, as usual. It ought to be red."

"Sir James has a slight impediment of the speech, my lord."

"How can he speak at all—with such whiskers?"

Sir James, meanwhile, was examining with interest the wine list. He looked up from it to see a middle-aged man, with a kind face, slowly approaching him.

"My name is Exminster. Charrington proposed you, didn't he? We don't introduce here—rule of the Club—but in Charrington's absence you will allow me to congratulate you."

"W-w-what f-f-for?"

"On being a member of this Club."

Sir James nodded. The men shook hands. In a loud, raucous voice the new member exclaimed:—

"W-w-waiter!"

A Fred appeared instantly.

"*T-t-two* c-c-cocktails."

"Very good, Sir James."

"You j-jolly well s-s-see that they are good, my lad."

Lord Exminster coughed. Fred hastened away with a pained expression upon his face.

"You'll j-j-join me in a s-s-splash, Mr. Exminster?"

It is an inviolate rule at the Grid that no member offers another a drink. Exminster, as chairman of the committee, was fussily particular about this, because some of the younger members chafed under it. Accordingly he hesitated. He was about to order a cocktail; he wanted one; it would be churlish to rub into a new member that he had been guilty of a breach of etiquette, and—a determining reason—no other members were present.

"I—I can hardly say—no."

The cocktails were brought and drunk.

"Two more of the s-s-same b-b-brand," roared Sir James.

Exminster held up a thin, protesting hand.

"Forgive me! One hint, as we are alone. In this Club, and in most of the old-established clubs, it is not quite in order for one member to offer a drink to a fellow-member."

"R-r-really? What b-b-bally r-rot!"

Exminster explained politely:—

"You see, that—er—sort of thing leads to what is called, I believe, rounds of drinks. And that is not done here."

FURTHER discussion of a delicate subject was interrupted by the advent of half-a-dozen members, hungry and thirsty, and bubbling over with talk, the sort of talk that flows easily from men in high places who know that what they say will not be repeated. Each man in turn exchanged salutations with the new member. Exminster sat at the head of the long table and invited Sir James Pont to sit next him. Sir James ordered a dozen oysters and a pint of Montrachet.

As an opening gambit this was promising. The new member was accepted as a *bon vivant*. Was he a *bon garçon?*

A brilliant dramatist sat opposite to Pont. Exminster asked the new member if he had seen "Back of Nowhere."

"R-r-rotten show! M-m-muck! Mixture of p-p-pap and p-p-pep."

The brilliant dramatist squirmed and tried to look as if he were happy. Exminster kicked Pont gently.

"'Ware c-corns!" said Pont, lustily. Then, in high good humour with himself, and addressing a distinguished actor, he continued:—

"D-d-don't often do a play. 'Cos why? N-no actors. Englishmen on the stage are —s-s-sticks."

Devastating silence. Certain gentlemen not connected with the British stage smiled. An eminent K.C. turned the talk into another channel:—

"Your place is in Cornwall, I believe, Sir James?"

"B-b-back o' Nowhere. If the c-chump who wrote that play had come to me, I'd have given him the g-g-goods."

"I'm so sorry I didn't," murmured the dramatist.

Unabashed, the new member blinked at him.

"Hay? You w-w-wrote it?"

"Yes."

"Um! W-w-well, I d-didn't like it."

"And I don't care a damn whether you did or not."

Worse—and worse—followed. Sir James, stuttering more than ever, introduced the forbidden subject—politics. Two ex-Cabinet Ministers graced the board. The new member, waxing eloquent, denounced Liberals and Conservatives in scathing terms.

"M-m-missed their opportunities—s-s-slackers and f-f-funks—all of 'em—parcel of old w-w-women—wouldn't surprise me a bit if these new b-b-brooms swept their dirty decks. Hi! Waiter!"

"Sir?"

"Steak and k-k-kidney pie, and a t-t-tankard o' London stout, the s-s-stuff they stick a nigger into the v-v-vat to give the r-right s-s-smack to it."

A dignified member of the Upper House rose and left the room. His half-eaten cutlet and unsipped glass of claret proclaimed unspoken protest. The other members exchanged glances. Escape—unless a man abandoned his luncheon—was impossible. General conversation ceased; members talked to each other in confidential undertones. Pont turned to Exminster.

"Why did that starchy c-c-cove leave his g-g-grub?"

Exminster, a sometime Ambassador, replied blandly:—

"I'm sure he'll be happy to tell you when he comes back."

"I've seen his phiz in the c-c-comic p-p-papers. Who is he?"

"He *was* Lord President of the Council."

"S-s-stuffy, what?"

"We have not found him so, Sir James."

The new member attacked his steak and kidney pie. As he ate he talked, "nicking in" to the confidential undertones. Three men carried their glasses of port to the other end of the room. Finally Sir James was left in splendid isolation.

He didn't seem to mind this; he ordered a dock glass of Cockburn, '90, and a double brandy. When he tasted the coffee, he roared across the room at Exminster:—

"I s-say—this is s-s-sheep-wash!"

"Is it? I—I didn't make it, but you can write the usual complaint on the back of your bill."

Now the Grid prides itself upon its coffee. Old members glared at the new member, as he grinned at them through his Assyrian beard. Sir James addressed them collectively:—

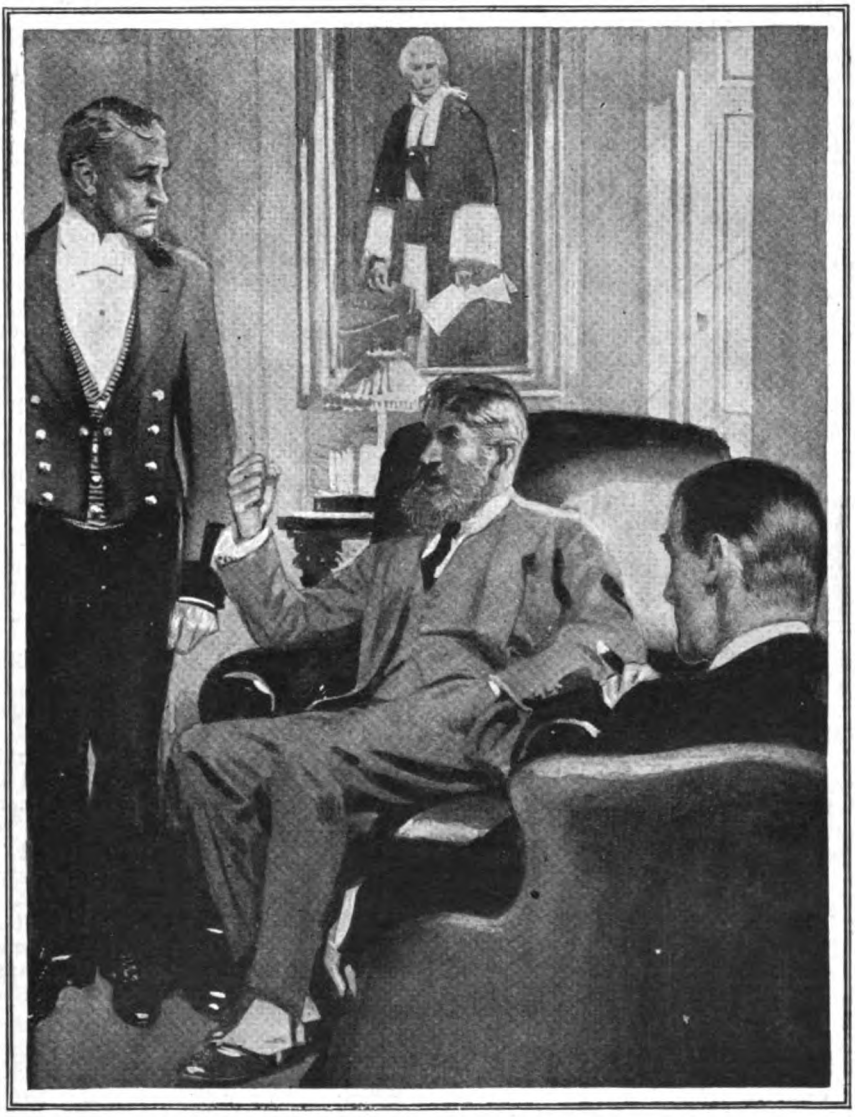
"I joined this Club because T-Tom Charrington t-told me that the grub and the c-c-company were tip-top. Bar the coffee and the ex-Lord President—no complaints! I shall always meal here when I'm in town."

A famous surgeon asked, courteously:—

"Are you likely to be in town much?"

"Up f-f-for a m-m-month."

As he spoke he produced an evil-looking pipe and an immense pouch of the strongest tobacco.



"W-w-waiter! *T-t-two* c-c-cocktails."
"Very good, Sir James."
"You j-jolly well s-s-see that they are good, my lad."

The great surgeon whispered to Exminster :—

"This fellow is insupportable."

"Shush-h! He was supported by Charrington."

"You astound me. Couldn't the Club be closed for repairs during the next month?"

Sadly, Exminster shook his head.

At this moment the new member finished his brandy, rose from his chair, not too steadily, and exclaimed, impressively :—

"H-h-hope to s-s-see all you old b-bucks at d-d-dinner."

Puffing volumes of acrid smoke from his pipe, he strode from the room.

Everybody spoke at once, a Babel of curses. When comparative peace was restored, the dramatist put into words the common verdict :—

"We can't stick this chap; he must resign. Char and Treherne ought to be kicked out, too."

"Crucified—before breakfast."

"I suggest," said Exminster, "that this Cornish gentleman has gone mad since Char and Treherne put him up."

This was kindly said and accepted in a clubbable spirit. A Die-hard murmured:—

"I feel sorry for Charrington and Treherne."

"I must see Charrington at once. Fred!"

"My lord?"

"Was Major Charrington in the Club yesterday?"

"No, my lord. Major Charrington is, I believe, in Paris."

"And Mr. Treherne?"

"Mr. Treherne was in yesterday. As your lordship is aware, Mr. Treherne never lunches here."

"Can we lunch or dine till this accursed Cornishman returns to Cornwall?"

This question provoked hot debate, and brought to the surface that British backbone which is the envy of all foreigners. Led by Exminster, solemnly exhorted by him, the Gridites refused to abandon the Club. Most of them—all that were able to do so—pledged themselves to return and dine.

The Grid closes at three and reopens at four.

III.

EXMINSTER came back at four, much to his inconvenience, but he hoped to meet Treherne, who was in the habit of dropping in early. As Chairman of the committee, he told himself that he had not been so upset since 1914. In a sense, this Cornishman had declared war against the cherished traditions and observances of the Grid. In fine, he regarded Sir James Pont as a Hun.

The editor of an important Review entered the Club at the same moment. He had not lunched there. To him Exminster recited the facts.

"I ask you, my dear Sage, what can we do?"

A curt and disconcerting reply:—

"Nothing."

To Exminster's relief a dominant personality in and out of the Club treated the subject seriously:—

"It would be easier to kick a parson out of his own pulpit. You elected him. So long as he stops short of conduct that would justify expulsion, he can do and say what he likes. I gather from what you tell me that he is just a common or garden bounder."

"Yes; and as unconscious of his bounds as a kangaroo."

The steward approached.

"Mr. Treherne is coming up the stairs, my lord."

"Please tell Mr. Treherne that I wish to speak to him at once upon a matter of pressing importance."

A minute later Treherne appeared.

"Thank the Lord! You're the man we want."

"Is anything wrong?"

Exminster gripped his arm.

"Sir James Pont lunched here to-day."

"Did he? And who is Sir James Pont?"

"Who is he? My God! He's a new member, proposed by Char and seconded by you. You two stuffed him in here. And he's impossible. The fellow has affronted half-a-dozen members already. Now—what the devil have you got to say about it?"

Treherne looked uneasy. He attempted a bluff.

"Pont must be all right if Char proposed him. Char asked me to second him. I meet a lot of people, so do you. I accept most of 'em, as you do, upon the valuation of others. Char told me that I'd met Pont shooting somewhere."

Exminster said, emphatically:—

"I can't believe it. If you'd met this fellow out shooting, you'd have shot him—on sight. Char is in Paris; you are here. You—*you* must do something."

"Can't recall him. What's he like?"

"He's like a gorilla."

Treherne, small, slight, spick-and-span, shrugged his shoulders.

"And you ask me to tell a gorilla that he ought to resign from the Grid because you think him a bounder. I'd sooner resign myself."

"You refuse to take any action?"

"My dear old Ex, I shall throw myself on the mercy of the committee. *Mea culpa!* I have sinned grievously; I trusted Char instead of pleading a defective memory. I came here to get my letters. I'm late for an important appointment as it is. Bye-bye."

He vanished.

The editor said, hopefully:—

"Charrington may have come back from Paris. Why not ring him up?"

Exminster rushed to the telephone. He returned joyously.

"Charrington is back. I'm off to his flat as fast as a taxi can take me."

He, too, vanished. The editor smiled, but he had not yet seen Sir James Pont.

IV.

AS his taxi rolled swiftly along Pall Mall the Chairman of the Gridiron Club underwent a cooling process. If he displayed the exasperation which he felt Charrington would be amused, because somehow an ex-hussar sucked fun out of the lighter woes of others. Charrington might regard the affair as a huge joke.

Exminster, slightly confounded by the

warmth of an old friend's greeting, dissembled. Sir James Pont had not been mentioned over the telephone. Exminster was terrified of publicity, and regarded ridicule as the deadliest of weapons.

"I heard you were back from Paris, Char."

"Yes. As we are not at the Grid, may I offer you a whisky and soda? I may. Good."

"Talking of the Grid," said Exminster, lightly, "I met your friend Pont there to-day. What a charming fellow!"

"Damn Pont!"

"Why?"

"I wanted to introduce Pont to all you fellows myself. And now he's weighed in without me. Charming, you say?"

"He made a remarkable impression."

"Did he? Jim Pont takes knowing. The better you know him, the more you like him. He doesn't put his big strawberries on top of the basket. But he'll be *persona grata*, because—forgive my saying so—there is too much talk at the Grid. Not enough good listeners. Now Pont, bless him! has the breed and quality of still champagne. I'll bet sixpence you all cottoned to him because, as a new member, he ran mute."

Exminster gulped down his drink.

"Are you pulling my leg?"

"Most emphatically—no."

"Then your friend Pont has gone stark, staring mad! He's blatant—he's offensive—he eats and drinks like a bargee. He looks like an orang-outang. He is in London for a month. Before the week is out your friend Pont will have wrecked the Grid. He will lunch and dine there alone."

Charrington rose with dignity and took from the mantelpiece a framed photograph.

"That," he said, gravely, "is my friend, Jim Pont. I had a notion to show this to the committee, but I thought that what I said about him would secure his election anyway."

Exminster stared at a thin, sensitive face, crinkled with lines indicating whim and humour, the face of a man who loved horses and children.

"We've been had," he gasped.

"It looks like it. Probably some journalist has secured a lot of copy at our expense. Console yourself with this thought, Ex: you won't see your orang-outang again."

Exminster smiled faintly. Still——! The members of the Grid *featured* in the picture Press—the late Lord President of the Council made a laughing-stock! Horrible!

Charrington, however, was sympathetic; he showed no amusement; he appeared to grasp—as his Chairman did—the issues involved. But when Exminster put his own question: "What can we do?" Charrington answered as the Sage did: "Nothing." He added: "I'll go back with you to the Club, and we'll talk it over. I'm dining out, and must return here to dress."

V.

WHEN they reached the Grid many members had assembled. The name Pont was on every lip.

"Gentlemen," said the Chairman, "be prepared for a shock. Sir James Pont has been impersonated by some audacious blackguard, probably connected with the Press. This is Sir James," he held aloft the photograph, "and I affirm that on appearance alone he will be heartily welcome in this club."

The brilliant dramatist, abandoning pap for pep, said, fiercely:—

"But we must find and kill the other fellow."

"To the Tiber with him."

Lord Exminster calmed them:—

"Gentlemen, we shall never see his awful face again. If this regrettable incident becomes public, we must laugh with the public."

The distinguished actor hazarded a conjecture:—

"The man may be a dramatic critic."

"Or a Socialist."

Exminster summed up the impostor:—

"He is a clever cad."

"Did he pay for what he called his grub?"

The steward was summoned.

"The gentleman who lunched here to-day did not pay for his luncheon because he said that he was returning for dinner."

Charrington murmured:—

"I'll pay his bill. Bring it."

Charrington surveyed it when it was presented.

"*Two* cocktails—as a starter."

"One of them was mine," said the Chairman. "I accepted it under protest. I insist upon paying for it."

"Tosh!" exclaimed Charrington. He settled the bill in full, and instructed the steward not to destroy it.

"An interesting document. This impostor may be all you fellows say, but I hail him as a valiant trencherman."

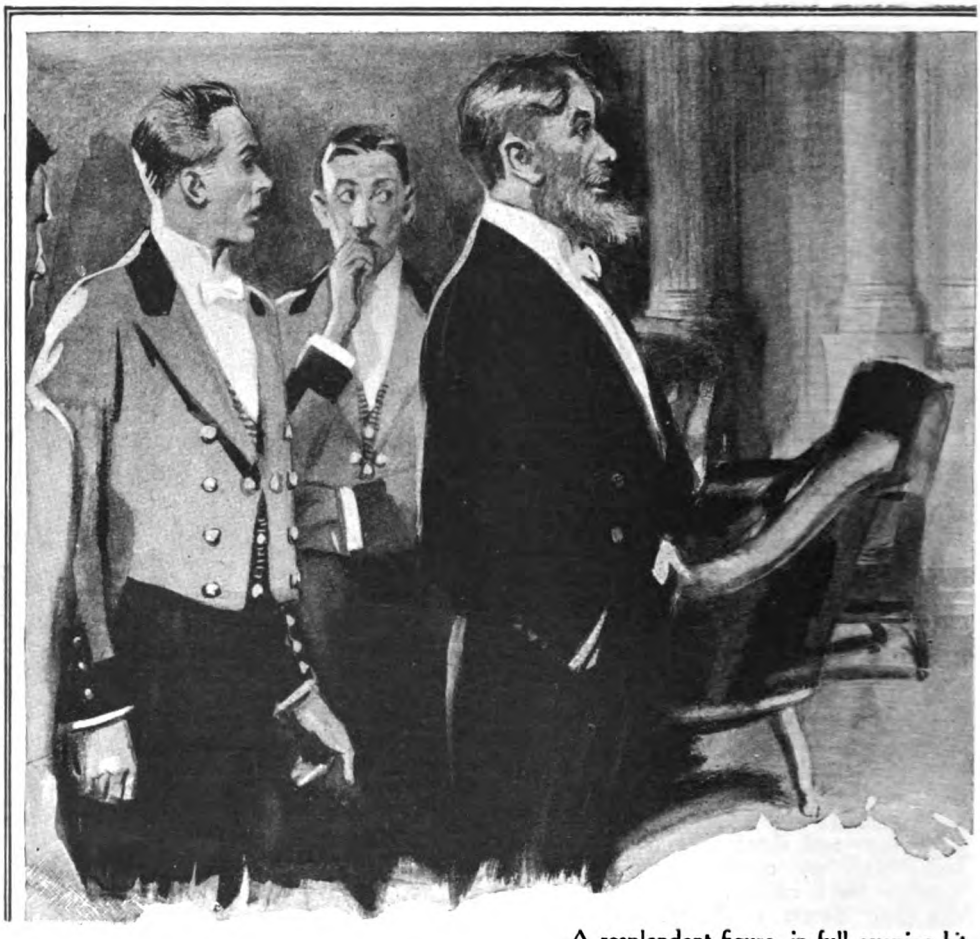
Exminster, with a glance at the steward's reassuring face, said to him quietly:—

"We can—er—rely upon the discretion of the staff?"

The steward replied sorrowfully:—

"Oh, my lord, can you doubt our loyalty?"

"I beg your pardon. I shall dine here



A resplendent figure, in full evening kit, three "Freds." Simultaneously all

to-night. Take the chill off a bottle of Chambertin."

The Sage of Fleet Street whispered to the brilliant dramatist :—

"Shall we split a magnum of Margaux ?"

"Certainly."

Confidence in themselves and in their Club was restored. Charrington took leave of his fellow-members with unaffected regret.

VI.

THERE are two sets of regular diners at the Grid. The distinguished actors are constrained to dine at seven; the others sit down, more or less punctually, at eight. But there is overlapping. Long before eight-thirty the long table, glittering with old silver—the gifts of the members—exhibits few empty chairs (or glasses).

At eight-fifteen, upon this particular night, the atmosphere of the Club may be described as slightly above normal. By tacit but common consent the regrettable incident was regarded as hermetically sealed. The Gridites ate and drank and made merry.

Suddenly, a resplendent figure, in full evening kit, entered the room, followed tremblingly by three "Freds." Simultaneously all the members sprang to their feet.

The impersonator of Sir James Pont had come back to dine.

Exminster, at the head of the table, was sensible that the eyes of his fellow-members turned instinctively from the bearded impostor to him. He, obviously, was expected to deal faithfully with the situation.

None the less, the impostor spoke first.

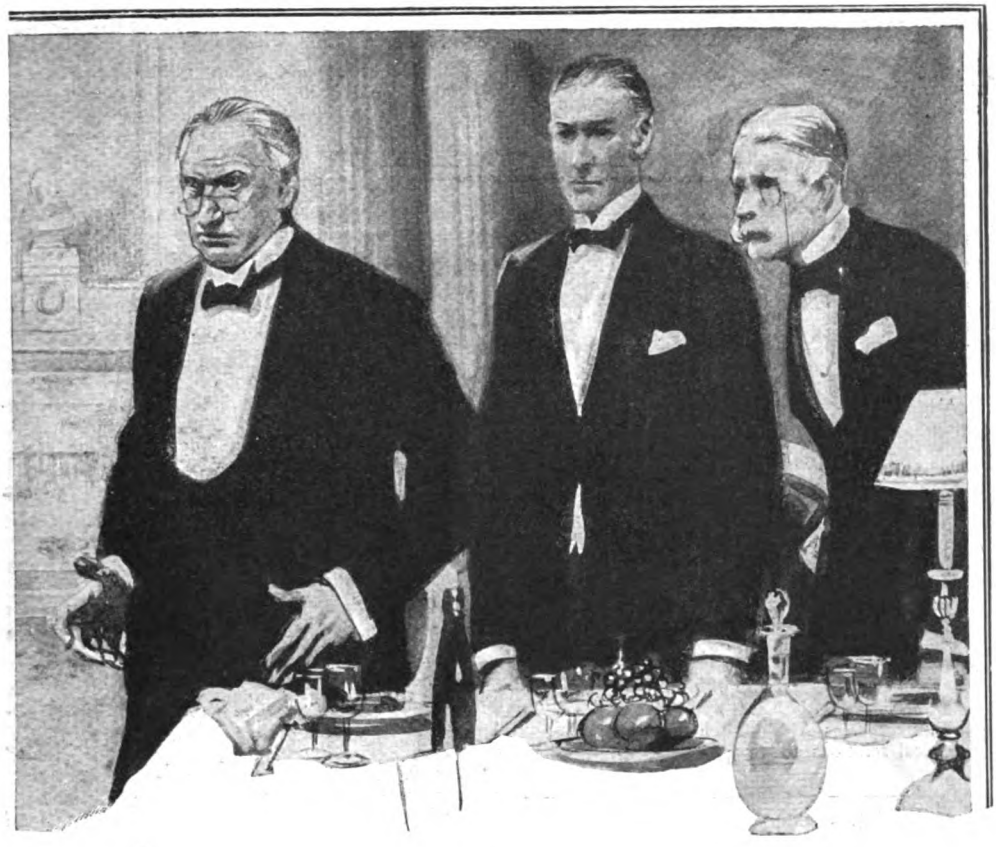
"G-g-got r-r-room for a little 'un, hay ?"

His voice rang through the welkin, wherever that may be.

The Chairman addressed the steward :—

"Why was this person allowed in here ?"

"Three of us, my lord," panted the steward, "were unable to keep him out."



entered the room, followed tremblingly by the members sprang to their feet.

" I—I b-b-brushed 'em out of my path, old bean, like f-f-flies. S-s-sit down! I w-w-want my dinner. I—I've h-had no t-t-tea."

Somebody, feeble of limb, suggested the police. The impostor bellowed :—

" C-c-can't turn me out of this p-p-pot-house."

" I think we can," said Exminster, coolly, " and without calling in the police."

" I—I shall b-bring an action against you for heavy d-d-damages if you d-d-do."

" Upon what grounds ? "

" B-b-because I'm a member of the Club in good and honourable standing."

Again the welkin was rent in twain with a derisive howl of incredulity.

" W-w-wait and s-s-see ! "

A magnificent beard was hurled into the face of the brilliant dramatist ; a heavy wig struck the superb cranium of the Sage.

Charrington stood before them !

After a breathless pause, Exminster burst into a roar of laughter. Everybody laughed and applauded.

The Grid had been spoofed !

Charrington, without a smile upon his face, exclaimed :—

" Fred ! "

" Sir ? "

" Bring me the betting-book."

The betting-book at the Grid is almost as interesting (and as valuable) as the betting-book at Brooks's. In it are recorded the wagers made between members.

The steward brought the sacrosanct volume. Charrington took it, opened it, and read aloud the following entry :—

" Major Charrington wagers fifty guineas with Lord Exminster that he will break the most cherished rule of the Club. Within six months Lord Exminster will be offered a drink by Major Charrington, and Lord Exminster will accept and drink the same."

" I'll take your cheque now, my dear old Ex," said Charrington.

Exminster expressed the sense of the Grid.

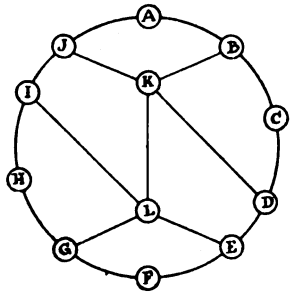
" You've earned it, Char."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

703.—THE SURVEYOR'S PROBLEM.

THE illustration is a sketch map of a district in the county of Riddleshire, the circles representing towns and villages and the lines the roads connecting them. The local surveyor has to make his annual inspection of these roads, going over all of them. He wants to know what route he should take in order to travel the least distance possible. He can start and end wherever he likes, but of course it will be necessary for him to go over some of the roads twice. Can you find his best route?



704.—A CURIOUS PROGRESSION.

A VALUED correspondent recently sent me this: "An arithmetical progression is 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, the five terms of which sum to 150. Find another progression of five terms, without fractions, which sum to 153." I noted at once the wily omission of a word in the last sentence, because such an *arithmetical* progression is not possible. I therefore suggested, by way of jest, this queer solution: a progression of five current silver coins, 3d., 1s., 2s. 6d., 4s., 5s., which sum to 153 pence. "This," he writes, "hits my sense of humour exactly, and I think STRAND readers would like it." But this is not his own answer, which is quite satisfying—no algebraical complexities. What is it? The numbers progress according to some simple rule.

705.—THE "ANTIQUE" SHOP.

THE following (by J. D. R.) is interesting because as many as ten different words are formed from the same six letters. It is perhaps inevitable that the application of some of the missing words should be rather forced, but against that I set the fact that, for a reason that will soon be obvious to the reader, a solution is quite easy.

If thou ..... aught for ..... that portray chairs of the past,
Look for ..... of a ..... that has lately been .....
Ere thou ..... off to buy, search for ..... heed these facts—
He who ..... still has ..... full. Sell before the price .....!

706.—TWO CONUNDRUMS.

WHAT is that from which you may take away the whole and yet have some left?

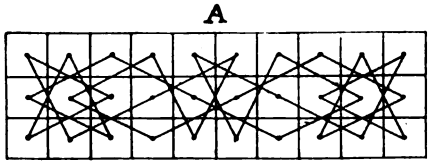
What islanders are represented by these letters: E, E, E?

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

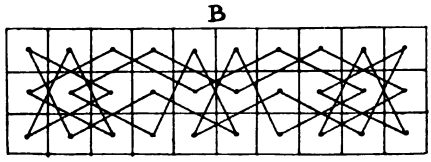
698.—A REDUCED KNIGHT'S TOUR.

THE diagrams A and B show the only two symmetrical solutions to this problem. If you reflect

A



B



them in a mirror they are automorphic—they simply reproduce themselves. I have not space to show all the solutions, but they are as follows:—

2 symmetrical (A and B) give (by reversal only) 2 ways each .. .. = 4
2 asymmetrical give (by reflection only) 2 ways each .. .. = 4
2 do. give (by both reversals and reflections) 4 ways each .. .. = 8
6 16

So that if you start with the knight in a corner, as I showed it, you can proceed in 16 different ways, but only 6 of these will be fundamentally different.

699.—FACTORIZING.

IF the number of noughts enclosed by the two ones is 2 added to any multiple of 3, two factors can always be written down at once in this curious way. $1001 = 11 \times 91$; $100000 = 101 \times 9901$; $1000000001 = 1001 \times 999001$; $100000000001 = 10001 \times 99990001$. The last is our required answer, and $10001 = 73 \times 137$. The multiple of 3 in 11 is 3: therefore we insert 3 noughts in each factor and one more 9. If our number contained 101 noughts, as I suggested, then the multiple of 3 is 33 and the factors will contain 33 noughts and 34 nines in the form shown. If the number of noughts in the number be even you can get two factors in this way: $1001 = 11 \times 91$; $100001 = 11 \times 9091$; $1000001 = 11 \times 909091$; and so on.

700.—SELLING EGGS.

THE smallest possible number of eggs is 103, and the woman sold 60 every day. Any multiple of these two numbers will work. Thus, she might have started with 206 eggs and sold 120 daily; or with 309 and sold 180 daily. But we required the smallest possible number.

701.—A RUSTIC CHARADE.

THE answer is SPARROW-GRASS. Nuttall gives this old corruption of asparagus, which is still heard in country districts.

702.—APPLES AND ORANGES.

THE following table shows the twelve smallest numbers and the order in which the oranges are counted out. Any multiple of 840 added to these numbers will do equally well. I have placed 0 at the top instead of 840 to show that if you add any two numbers equidistant from the ends you will get 421. Thus 0 and 421, 30 and 391, and so on. The four letters may be permuted in 24 different ways, but only half of these are possible. The required answer is 30.

A B C D	0	A C D B	216
C A B D	30	C B D A	246
B A D C	71	A D B C	320
D A C B	101	C D A B	350
B C A D	175	B D C A	391
D B A C	205	D C B A	421

That "Kruschen" Feeling!

The hope of his side

You've only to look at Grandpa to realise that he's pretty well set! The hale and hearty old fellow may pull his team through yet.

Hale and hearty he is, and so are they all, a jolly, romping family, young and old full of the joy of spring health. Long hours in the office, no open-air exercise except at week-ends, worries, anxieties, hurried meals—they leave no mark on Father. Gout and rheumatism? Well, just look at Grandpa! He hasn't known them for years. Household cares and bills mean nothing to Mother with her jolly, happy family of rosy-cheeked kids and laughing husband.

And the secret of it all—just **good health** via Kruschen Salts. One and all they take the little daily dose—just enough of the crystals to cover a sixpence in the breakfast cup of tea (half measure or occasional dose as required for the children). Mother has the bottle of Kruschen on the breakfast tray, and puts the crystals in each cup as she makes the tea. So easy for everybody; no fuss with the children, no "medicine time," no coaxing—because the Kruschen crystals are tasteless when taken this way in tea.

They choose Kruschen Salts for three very good reasons. First, because Kruschen is the only depurative which exercises tonic action while cleansing the system. Second because Kruschen is nature's own remedy, contains the very salts which your system should extract from your food, but which are deficient in the system because of modern conditions of life—sedentary occupation, overwork, anxiety, impaired digestion, and so on. Third, and by no means least, because Kruschen is most economical—costing less than a ¼d. a day for good health.

Remember it's the little daily dose that does it! Every chemist sells Kruschen Salts in 6d., 1/-, and 1/9 bottles. Get a bottle to-day.

Now in 3 Sizes

Kruschen Salts are now sold by all chemists in bottles of three sizes at the following prices:—

6d.

1/- **1/9**

Bottles.

Kruschen Salts

Good Health for a Farthing a Day

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Air Guns, Pistols, Etc. PAGE
Clarke, Frank 58

Art Furnishers.
Allen, J. J., Ltd. 31
Williamson & Cole, Ltd. 27

Artificial Limbs, Etc.
McClean, A. E., & Sons 63

Baby Carriages, Cots, Rugs, Etc.
Otterburn Rug 5
Treasure Cot 12

Bath Cabinets, Etc.
Foot, J., & Son, Ltd. 36

Billiard Tables.
Riley, E. J., Ltd. 44

Boots and Shoes, Etc.
Abbott, W., & Sons, Ltd. ... 25
Barratt, W., & Co., Ltd. 38 & Cover 3
Cathedral & Master Shoes ... 29
Cherry Blossom Boot Polish ... 55
Dri-ped Soles 11
Freeman, Hardy & Willis ... 32
Hogg's Brogue Shoe 40
I.T.S. Rubber Heels 48
Norwell's "Perth" Footwear ... 43
Patent Canvas Shoe 32
Phillips' Rubber Soles 24
Quinn's Vestal Cream 14
Saxone Shoe Co. 14
Suttons 34
Waukeezi Shoes 20

Camping Outfits, Tents, Etc.
Lightweight Tent 58
Pocock, H. 44

Charities, Etc.
Dr. Barnardo's Homes 48

China and Glass, Etc.
Fenton Pottery 30
Home Supply Pottery 36

Cider.
Evans, W., & Co., Ltd. 50

Cigarettes, Tobacco, Pipes, Etc.
Orlik Pipe 23
Player's Navy Cut 62

Corsets, Belts, Etc.
Health Corsets 47

Costumes, Dress Materials, Etc.
Huttons 14
Wood Bros. (Maternity Skirts) ... 61

Cutlery, Safety Razors, Etc.
Gillette Safety Razor 10
Mab Razor 28

Cycles and Accessories.
Brooks' Saddles 35
Hearn Cycle 36
Mead Cycles 44
Swift Cycles 24

Educational.
Bennett College 35
Commercial Art School 58
Dutton's Shorthand 64
Holborn Hall College 40
International Corr. Schools ... 37
Macdonald Smith 63
Metropolitan College 41
Pelman Institute 20
Pelman Languages Institute ... 39
Pitman's School 58
Premier School of Journalism ... 48
Press Art School 35
Regent Institute 43
School of Simplified Study ... 63
Schools and Colleges 49
Sloan-Duployan 44

Furniture and Furnishing.
Chalco Curtain Runner 31
Collier's Detachable Chair Canvas 34
Downing's (Wardrobe) 8
Globe Furnishing Co. 3
Heracles Mattress 30
Jelks, W., & Sons 30
Kon-tayn-al Clothing Cabinet ... 26
Riley's Bedsteads 44
Woodhouse, J., & Son 6

Horticulture.
Atco Specialities 28
Green's Lawn Mowers 41
McDougall & Robertson (Katakilla) 28

Hosiery, Clothing, Etc. PAGE
Aertex Underwear 33
Fox's Puttees 25
Labodex 58
Luvisca 51
Otterburn Woollie-Wrap ... 18
Sphere Suspenders 61

Household Linen, Curtains, Lace, Etc.
Cash, J. & J., Ltd. 31
Damasclene 30
Huttons 56
Osman Towels 17
Peach's Curtains 58
Robinson & Cleaver 20

Household Requisites.
Ashford, W. & G. 44
Bradford, T., & Co. 36
Dennison's Crepe Paper 26
E. J. R. Invisible Lacquer ... 36
Fluxite (Solder) 65
Goddard's Plate Powder 58
Mansion Polish 55
Mutax Dry Cleaning Brush ... 38
O-Cedar Mop Polish 29
Price's Night Lights 12
Purimachos Fire Cement ... 58
Sutton's Ammonia 46

Hygienic and Surgical Appliances.
Bailey's Elastic Stockings ... 61
B. L. Appliance 64
Brooks' Appliance 46
Deaf Appliance 16
Galvanic Ring 58
H. S. Wales Co. (Sound Disc) ... 58
Lees Ray 44
O'Connor Extension Co. 40
Pulvermacher Electrological Inst. 45
Salmon Ody, Ltd. 64
Scholl Mfg. Co. 46
Trilety, M. 62
Vernon Patent Appliance ... 40
Wilson Ear-Drum 64

Invalids' Appliances.
Foot's "Adapta" Bed Table ... 42
Foot's Adjustable Rest Chair ... 40
Foot's Wheel Chair 46
J. P. Witham Invalid Chair ... 38

Knitting, Darning, & Sewing Machines
E. J. R. Darner 30
Foster, W. & J. 63

Medical.
Antexema 56
Antipon 62
Brittain, J. Hart 64
Burton (Stammering) 58
Elliott-Smith, Godfry 58
Ellis (Nervous) 44
Eno's Fruit Salt 53
Genasprin 52
Himrod's Asthma Cure 58
Hughes, F. S. (Stammering) ... 44
Humagsolan 52
Kruschen Salts 1
Matthews, Stephen, & Co., Ltd. ... 60
Milton Antiseptic 23
Mineral Spring 18
Mothersill's Remedy 43
Muller Laboratories 47
Nostroline 65
Reudel Bath Saltrates 65
Robinson, J., & Sons 60
Turvey Treatment Association ... 45
Twilight Sleep Nursing Homes, Bushey Lodge 60
Urace Tablets 64
Woods, E. J. ... ... 62 & 64
Yadil 59
Yeast-Vite Tablets 42
Zox Powders 60

Millinery, Etc.
Wright, A. 16

Miscellaneous.
Carbic, Ltd. (Calculator) 34
"Cooper-Val" Picnic Cabinet ... 28
Maile, G., & Son (Churchyard Memorials) 38
Mansfield, W., & Co. (Water Finder) 55
Owen Cambridge & Co. (Stencilling) 44
Richardson, Lt.-Col. (Dogs) ... 44

Motor-Cycles, Cars, Launches, Etc.
Grigg Motor Cycles ... Cover 3
Rudge-Whitworth 33
Salter Bros. 64

Musical. PAGE
Hough, J. E., Ltd. (Records) ... 22
Machell's Dulcitone 22
Repeating Gramophones ... 42

Paint, Varnishes, Etc.
Pinchin, Johnson & Co. 9

Patent Foods.
"Allenburys" Diet 39
Ovaltine Tonic Food 57

Photography.
Hines (Films) 62
Kodak 4

Physical Culture.
Edison, S. M. 44
Girvan, A. 64
Muller Inst. 41
Strong, Melvin 58

Provisions.
Borwick's Baking Powder ... 55
Bournville Cocoa 55
Chivers' Jellies 46
Foster Clark's Custard 40
Fry's Cocoa ... 50 & Front Cover
Quaker Oats 13
Falk's Salt 37

Publishers' Announcements.
Adam, M., & Co. 60
Crusoe Magazine 66
Health Promotion, Ltd. 60
Simon Called Peter 63

Soaps.
Chivers' Carpet Soap 58
Lifebuoy Soap ... ...Back Cover
Vinolia 3
Wright's Coal Tar Soap ... Cover 2
Yardley's Lavender Soap ... 27

Sport Outfits, Etc.
Forbes, A. (Tennis Racket Press) 34

Stamps.
Atkinson & Co. 44
Bright & Son 44

Stationery.
Brandauer Pens 49
Faber's "Castell" Pencils ... 32
Koppio Carbon 44
Koppio Self-Inking Duplicator ... 42
Rolo Self-Inking Duplicator ... 43
Royal Sovereign Pencils 49
Terston Magazine Pencil ... 34
Zanetic Pen-Copying Paper ... 58

Sweets.
Cadbury's Chocolate 55
Clarnico-Lily Brazils 12
Fry's Chocolates ... 50 & Front Cover
Meltis Chocolate 46

Tailors.
Bedford Riding Breeches Co. ... 24
Groves & Lindley 32

Toilet.
Alexander's Shadeine 44
Amami Shampoos 19
Clark's Bath Salts 61
Cyclax Bath Salts 18
Hinde's Hair Wavers 16
Marshall & Co. 38
Mercolized Wax 56
Nuctone 27
Pepsodent 21
Pond's Cold Cream 16
Sphagnol Toilet Preparations ... 26
Tiffin's Dentabath 26
Veet Cream 47
West Electric Hair Curlers ... 26
"4711" Eau de Cologne ... 15

Toys, Games, Models, Etc.
Harbutt's Plasticine 55

Typewriters and Accessories.
Taylor's Typewriters 63

Watches, Jewellery, Etc.
Bravington 22
Britannic Bracelet Watch ... 28
Camerer Cuss & Co (Cuckoo Clocks) 20
Ciro Pearls 7
Samuel, H. 17

Waterproofs, Etc.
Aquascutum 24
Barbours' Beacon Oilskins ... 48

Furniture of Economy, Comfort and Wear

CASH OR EASY PAYMENTS—Free and Safe Delivery

by Motor Traction, or Rail to nearest Railway Station.

A SUITE WHICH WILL GIVE SATISFACTION IN WEAR.

If not approved of, can be returned at our expense, and any money paid will be refunded in full.

THE WORTHING SUITE
of Settee, one end adjustable, and two Divan Easy Chairs. All pieces are of comfortable size — our standard reliable upholstery work, interior coppered steel springs—British Web — superior new canvas — fibre and wool — British Castors, patent push-in Castors — Loose Down Cushions, covered in Tapestry or Corded Velvet, in pretty shades of Greys, Browns, Reds, Greens or Golds.

3-Piece Suite (Settee and 2 Easy Chairs).

23 guineas—£2 down, 12/6 monthly.
Cash Price - - £21 15 0

FREE Our Fully Illustrated Catalogue, together with Terms, etc. A perusal of this will save you Pounds in Furnishing.

GLOBE Furnishing Co. (Dept. E). J. R. GRANT, Proprietor. Pembroke Place LIVERPOOL.

Quality—the only test

Pearls—and Vinolia—typify purity. Both enhance a woman's beauty. Really fine pearls are scarce and costly. Vinolia, though rare in quality and of exquisite fragrance, is inexpensive and within the reach of all. Moreover, it soothes, softens, cleans, and really *refreshes* the skin. It is a combination of the purest oils and the finest perfumes. Its colour is natural. Highly skilled chemists control its manufacture from start to finish.

6d. per tablet
1/6 per box of three tablets
Large bath tablets 10d. each

Vinolia
PREMIER SOAP
First for Fragrance—Premier for Purity

RV 677—4

VINOLIA CO LTD. LONDON.

Happy Days are "Kodak" Days

Days are like books, eggs and other things; some are bad and some are good. Fortunately, we forget the bad—which is good; unfortunately, we forget the good, too—which is bad. Vivid memories of the happy past are above price, but you could begin to accumulate them to-day if you had a "Kodak"—memories of the children at play, the river, the country, the sea, and of those with whom you shared the long summer days! Although you can learn to use a "Kodak" in half-an-hour its joys cannot be exhausted in a lifetime.

Happy faces, pleasant places—saved up in a

Ask your nearest Kodak Dealer to show you the latest models.

"Kodak"

Have you seen the Kodak Magazine? Price 2d. monthly; 3/- a year, post free.

The Film for your "Kodak" is Kodak Film. Look for the word "Kodak" on the yellow carton and on the spool end.

Kodak Ltd., Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Let "Teddie" and an "Otterburn" take care of Baby for you

Bedtime finds many a drowsy Little Toddler struggling against sleep and wailing for "Teddie," but . . . snugly "tucked up" in a fleecy-light, cosily-warm, all-new-wool Otterburn Rug—with "Teddie" mounting Guard—Baby goes happily *and safely* to sleep.

Your Baby could not have a more faithful guardian against night chills and other Baby ills than this Otterburn Rug. Every hour of the twenty-four, sleeping or waking, there's a *good* use for an "Otterburn."

Carefully and conscientiously made from the wool of hardy, healthy sheep, born, reared, and sheared in the Mother Country, Otterburn Baby Rugs have endeared themselves to Mothers everywhere—at home and abroad alike.

The OTTERBURN Baby-Rug as a Pram Cover.

As a Nursing Wrap.

The "Otterburn" is substantial, fleecy and warm, without undue weight. It lasts for years, and washes excellently. In fact, with ordinary care, it *improves* with washing. Handy, yet *ample* in size, the "Otterburn" measures 30 in. by 36 in., and is made in Grey, Cream, Sky, Saxe, Rose, Navy, and Biscuit colours. For cot or cradle it makes a cosy blanket; when baby "walks out" it does protecting duty as a Pram Rug; indoors, it makes the snuggest Nursing Wrap. The "Otterburn" is made from nought but pure, *new* wool, and each manufacturing process is personally controlled by Waddells of the third and fourth generation. Spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing are in full accord with the "Otterburn" principles of honesty and goodness, laid down in 1821 by the first William Waddell.

Sold by Drapers, Pram Sellers, etc.

Ask to see *Otterburn* Baby Rugs and look for the little tab. If your draper is unable to supply, send us his name and address, with your own, enclosing remittance for **13/11**, and *stating colour* needed. We will then supply you, post free, and credit your shopman with the sale.

Otterburn Mill Ltd., Otterburn Bridge, Northumberland.

The little Otterburn Tab below, in effect says: "This Rug, made—as all Baby things should be made—by people with a conscience, is worth *far more* than its very reasonable price, for it safeguards the health of your Baby."

PRODUCT OF Otterburn Mill Ltd PURE WOOL REG. TRADE MARK.

Trade enquiries are invited from Drapers, Pram Sellers, and Stores dealing in Baby Wear.

(16) LH

13/11 Otterburn Rug

Made entirely from Pure, New Wool.

A Warning.

The silk-woven Tab showing the old Mill is stitched on each genuine Otterburn Rug. Look for it always. If you are offered an imitation, say "No" firmly; take no chances with Baby's Health and Comfort.

WOODHOUSE'S

THE IDEAL HOME has been the dream of many thousands of people, but Woodhouse's have now made it capable of immediate realisation. You can furnish a home of any size for a very small outlay and on exceptionally easy terms of purchase with fine quality Furniture that has never been so low priced since pre-war days, and is now down to rock bottom prices.

WILL FURNISH A 4-ROOMED HOUSE, FLAT OR MAISONETTE ON PAYMENT OF

£10

Consisting of

DINING ROOM SITTING ROOM
BEST BEDROOM SPARE BEDROOM

To-day's value 155 gns.

REDUCED PRICE (the home as described) £110
CASH PRICE £99

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £10, the balance to be paid at the rate of £2 10 0 per month.

PRICES OF SEPARATE PIECES ON APPLICATION.

ORDER BY POST.

Those living out of town may safely order by post from this advertisement or from our Catalogue "S M" (which will be sent post free on application), the Illustrations of which are taken from photos of the actual goods. Our Fire and Life Policies can be had free for the asking.

THIS HANDSOME MAHOGANY BEDROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF

Mahogany Inlaid Bedroom Suite, size 4 ft., with full-size Bedstead to match. The latest in design and finish. To-day's value 50 gns.

REDUCED PRICE 39 Gns. CASH PRICE 35 Gns. If with 3 ft. Chest instead of Washstand, 50/- extra.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £4, the balance to be paid at the rate of 25/- per month.

80/-

THIS FINE JACOBEAN BEDROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF

3 ft. Jacobean Oak Bedroom Suite and full-size Bedstead to match. Thoroughly well-made and finished. To-day's value 30 gns.

REDUCED PRICE 21 Gns. CASH PRICE 19 Gns. If with 2ft. 6in. Chest instead of Washstand, 37/6 extra.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £2, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month.

40/-

THIS SPLENDID DINING ROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF

Dining Room consisting of Handsome Oak Sideboard, size 4 ft., with two spacious cupboards and two drawers. Oak Extending Dining Table, size 5 ft. x 3 ft. Five-piece Oak Dining Room Chairs (one arm and four smalls). Upholstered in antique Rexine, any shade. Thoroughly well-made and finished.

REDUCED PRICE 25 Gns. CASH PRICE 22½ Gns. To-day's value 35 gns.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £2 10 0, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month.

50/-

THIS SITTING ROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF

Sitting Room consisting of Cosy Settee and two Easy Chairs, stuffed fibre and hair, carved fronts, well sprung and upholstered in rich French Damasks, various designs and colourings, and fitted with soft loose cushions. 4 ft. Mahogany Reproduction Dwarf Bookcase and Mahogany Occasional Table.

REDUCED PRICE 28 Gns. CASH PRICE 25 Gns. To-day's value 38 Gns.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £3, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month.

60/-

JAS. WOODHOUSE & SON

50 - 52, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.4.
Telephones: CENTRAL 4342 & 1319.

55, NEW OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.C.1.
Telephone: MUSEUM 4351.

LIVERPOOL— 44-46, Lord St.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE— 49-51, Clayton St., & 4, Nun St.
EDINBURGH— 13, 15, 17, Nicolson St.
GLASGOW— 74-76, Union St.
FALKIRK— 48, 48, 50, Vicar St.
SOUTHAMPTON— 130, Above Bar.
SUNDERLAND— 196-197, High St., West.
MIDDLESBROUGH— Newport House.
BISHOP AUCKLAND— Bonanza Arcade.
MONTREAL (CANADA)

EVEN the costliest dress needs the added grace that only pearls can give. CIRO PEARLS enhance any frock or gown, and lend an air of charm, delicacy and distinction to the wearer. They are perpetually delightful and perpetually guaranteed.

OUR GUARANTEE OFFER.

We will send you a necklet of Ciro Pearls, 16 inches long, with solid gold clasp, in case, on receipt of One Guinea. You can wear them for a fortnight and compare them with any real pearls. If any difference is noticeable, return them to us and we will refund your money in full.

Pearl Booklet No. 12 post free on request.

Ciro Pearls Ltd

178 REGENT ST. LONDON W. 1. Dept 12
48 OLD BOND ST. LONDON W. 1
44 CHEAPSIDE, LONDON E.C. 2
25 CHURCH ST. LIVERPOOL

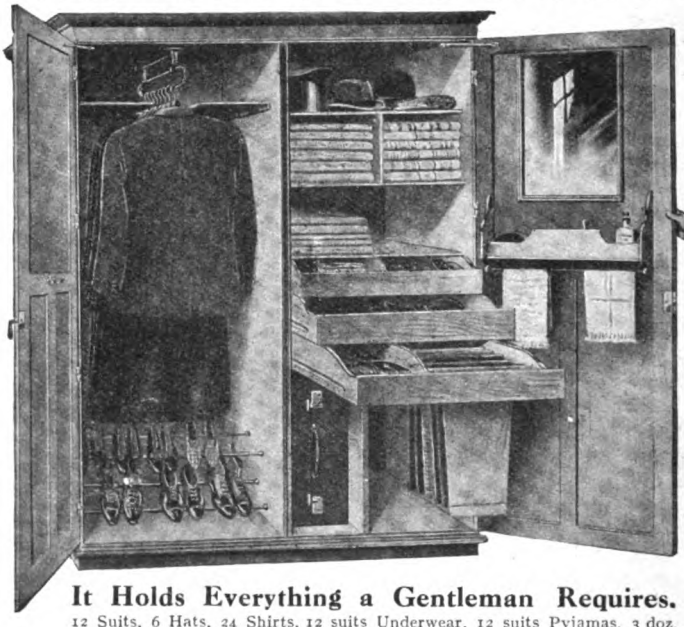
The AWLYN

ALL IN PLACE, VIEW & REACH

Keeps Your Outfit Fit.

A Place for Everything, Everything in its Place.

This wardrobe is a splendid example of the cabinet-maker's art. The drawers and hangers slide at a touch. Any article can be obtained instantly and replaced in a moment.



What Shall I Wear To-day?

It Holds Everything a Gentleman Requires.

12 Suits, 6 Hats, 24 Shirts, 12 suits Underwear, 12 suits Pyjamas, 3 doz. each Collars, Handkerchiefs and Socks, 8 pairs Boots, Suitcase, etc.

THE AWLYN GENT.'S WARDROBE. Perfectly constructed in OAK. Light, Dark, Fumed, or Antique Finish. Height, 6ft. 5ins.; width, 4ft. 6ins.; depth, 1ft. 10ins. - - - - **22 gns.**

Also supplied in Rich Mahogany, **26 gns.**

THE AWLYN JUNIOR (a smaller size). Height, 6ft.; width, 3ft. 6ins.; depth, 1ft. 8ins. In OAK. Light, Dark, Fumed, or Antique - - - - - **16 gns.**

Or in Mahogany, **19 gns**

SENT CARRIAGE PAID HOME. WRITE TO DESK "S" FOR PARTICULARS.

"The MARSTON BUREAU"

£5.12.6

CARRIAGE PAID HOME.

A perfect reproduction from a choice example of the wonderful craftsmanship of the Jacobean period. 2ft. 6ins. wide, made from fine-grain solid Oak. Fall Front, with automatic slides, full fitted desk, two long drawers below, antique fittings.

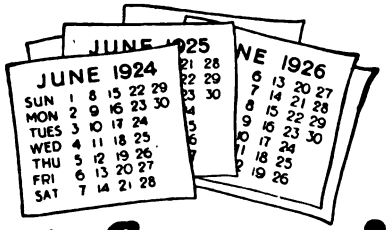
Write Desk "S" for Catalogue.

DOWNING'S THE CASH HOUSE

61, 62, 49, 50, 51, & 36, LONDON RD., ELEPHANT & CASTLE, LONDON, S.E.1

(Facing Bakerloo Tube Station.)

'Phone: **Central 7077**



Paint foresight

When you have your property painted, choose materials which will protect for the longest possible period, as well as provide fine appearance Instruct your Decorator to use

Pinchin, Johnson Super-Finishes

then the pleasure you obtain from seeing your property protected and beautified will be continuous. It is the QUALITY of PINCHIN, JOHNSON SUPER - FINISHES that gives you value, over a period of years.

All high-grade Decorators will willingly use any of the PINCHIN, JOHNSON SUPER-FINISHES upon request—but in the event of difficulty please communicate with us.

GRIPON SUPER-PAINT *Satinette* ENAMEL PAINT **DEYDOL** DISTEMPER

HYGEIA FLAT WALL FINISH **GRIPON** SUPERVAR

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN REGISTERED TRADE MARK GRIPON

THIS SIGN ON PAINT. ENAMEL VARNISH DISTEMPER ETC. INDICATES A PINCHIN-JOHNSON SUPER-FINISH

¶ A fine booklet, containing a specially prepared series of plates in full colour, suggesting decorative schemes for every room in the house, will be forwarded free upon request. Send a post-card to-day.

PINCHIN, JOHNSON & Co., Ltd.
General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2

By Appointment to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

"Simplicity itself, sir — the Gillette is the finest razor I know!"

Thus the dealer in recommending the famous Gillette Safety Razor states one of its most appreciated features—simplicity.

No fuss and bother with strops and hones. The Gillette is ready in an instant to give a velvety smooth shave, a treat that takes three minutes or less.

Ask a Gillette dealer to show you the full range of models, including:

THE NEW STANDARD—as illustrated above. Triple silver-plated New Improved Gillette Safety Razor, Metal Box containing 10 double-edge Gillette Blades (20 shaving edges) in genuine Leather-covered Case, purple velvet and satin-lined ... ... price **21/-**
Also Gold-plated ... ... price **25/-**

Other Models **21/-** and upwards. Old type Gillette Series, **5/-** complete with 2 blades (4 shaving edges).

GILLETTE BLADES.—In packets of 10 (20 shaving edges), price **4/6.** In packets of 5 (10 shaving edges), price **2/3.**

Sold by Stores, Cutlers, Ironmongers, Chemists, Hairdressers and Jewellers. Write for Illustrated Booklet.

GILLETTE SAFETY RAZOR, LTD., 184-188, Gt. Portland Street, London, W.1.

Use the **Gillette** Safety Razor

TRADE Gillette MARK KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

"The shave with the smile in it!"

NO STROPPING—NO HONING.

The noble Duke of York, that energetic biped,
He marched his men up hill and down—but he couldn't wear out "Dri-ped."

ALWAYS buy boots and shoes soled with "Dri-ped" super leather and save pounds a year on footwear bills. "Dri-ped" leather soles are guaranteed to give double-wear and guaranteed absolutely waterproof. Your footwear dealer can supply.

CAUTION.—*All "Dri-ped" Soled Footwear bears the word "Dri-ped" in the famous "Dri-ped" purple diamond, stamped every few inches on each sole. Look for the diamonds when you buy; firmly refuse substitutes. In case of difficulty, write to DRI-PED, LTD., BOLTON, LANCS.*

DRI-PED REG? The Leather Super for Soles

Always INSIST on having

DRI-PED SOLED

THE SUPER-LEATHER FOR SOLES

DOUBLE-WEAR BOOTS & SHOES

Always insist on having "Dri-ped" guaranteed double-wear repairs

142

Britain's nicest SWEETS

These most delicious sweets don't cost very much. They are the sugar-butter-cream caramels, studded with brazil nuts, which are famous everywhere as

CLARNICO LILY BRAZILS

Everyone — and especially our friends from overseas— should try these most luscious morsels. You can eat them daintily and buy them everywhere, each in its own wrapper, at 8d. per ¼ lb. Covered in Britain's best chocolate, 9d.

CLARNICO

Lily **BRAZILS**

CLARKE, NICKOLLS & COOMBS, LTD.,
Victoria Park, London.
Stand P.P. 630 (Palace of Industry), British Empire Exhibition, Wembley.

In Holiday Surroundings.

Many "grown-ups" as well as children dislike sleeping in strange surroundings. At holiday time this dislike is apt to become very real.

There is no surer, happier means of dispelling this aversion than by using PRICE'S NIGHT LIGHTS during your stay.

Whether at hotel, boarding house or furnished flat, "The Re-assuring Light" will be found to create just that needed sense of security which is essential to comfort.

Price's Night Lights

TREASURE COT Co LTD

Everything for Mother & Baby

PRICES:

TREASURE COTS
(undraped)

No. 0. Plain wood	34/6
No. 1. Polished	36/6
No. 2. White enamel	39/6
No. 20. 2nd grade quality, plain wood	26/9

HIGH CHAIRS from	44/6
PLAYGROUNDS ,,	34/6
CRIBS ,,	55/-
PRAMS ,,	119/6

Children's Clothes from Infancy to four years of age.
All Accouchement Requisites.

Goods sent carriage paid on seven days' approval anywhere in U.K.

Beautifully Illustrated 115 page Catalogue sent free in plain envelope on request.

TREASURE COT CO., LTD.
(Dept. U.I.), 103, Oxford Street, London, W.1.
Nearly opposite Bourne & Hollingsworth. 1st floor (lift)

Like toasted nuts

These dainty, toasted kernels blend well with any fruit. They add as much to a dish of fruit as a piecrust does.

Delicious, crisp grains of Puffed Wheat taste like toasted nuts. Sprinkle grains of Puffed Wheat in a bowl of milk. More tempting than "bread-and-milk." An ideal breakfast or supper dish.

Serve Puffed Wheat straight from the packet. No cooking. No trouble. A wonderful steam "explosion" process has cooked them perfectly. Every morsel is enjoyed and digested.

Salt the grains or douse with melted butter for hungry children between meals.

The same with Puffed Rice. Buy a packet of each to-day, and read how these fairy-like foods are "shot from guns." The kiddies will like the story, too.

Directions for making delicious sweetmeats given on the packets.

Puffed Wheat

also Puffed Rice

Buy a packet of Puffed Wheat or Puffed Rice to-day. See directions on packet for delightful, easily prepared dishes.

Guaranteed by

QUAKER OATS, LTD., LONDON, E.C.2.

Styles for the Stylish

Style 3608.

A slim and shapely shoe for men in soft Black Glace Kid with Patent cap, firm flexible sole of Summer-weight. The stitched cap is a refined note **21/-**

All Shoes sent post paid British Isles. Abroad extra.

Style 3809.

The World-famous Crepe Rubber sole —wearproof, resilient, non-slipping— fixed to quality shoes in Brown Willow Calf. Suitable for promenade or sports wear .. **21/-**

You may order the above shoes by post with assurance. Your size or foot outline will bring you a perfect fit. All shoes made in sizes, ½ sizes, and many fittings.

WRITE FOR CATALOGUE

64 pages of shoes for all Post free to any address.

SAXONE
SHOE CO LTD
(Dept S) KILMARNOCK
SCOTLAND

Regd. Trade Mark.

QUINN'S VESTA CREAM

For White **BOOTS & SHOES**

Fine for Cricket and Tennis Boots and Shoes. Can't rub off to soil dainty garments. Makes white Suède, Buck, and Canvas Shoes like new.

Easily put on, stays white and

Won't Rub off

Sold in Bottles, of all Boot and Sports Dealers.

If unable to obtain, write sole manufacturers:—

C. A. QUINN & CO., LTD., NORTHAMPTON.

Really Uncrushable Dress Linen

A great Bargain direct from Ireland—the home of fine Linen

Let your linen frocks look as fresh as the moment they were put on. You will have no more anxiety about "that rumpled look" if you send for Hutton's uncrushable linen.

Only 3/3 per yard.

36 inches wide.

Hutton's linens are all pure flax and the best quality of linen yarn in

60 FAST COLOURS

You will be absolutely delighted with these lovely linens. Send a trial order. Your money will be returned if you are not completely satisfied.
A large range of full colour patterns will be sent post free.
For all orders under 20/- add 6d. for postage.
Goods not approved can be returned to be exchanged or money refunded. Parcels of £15 and upwards carriage paid to any part of the world.

Hutton's

95, Main St., LARNE, Ireland.

4711

No. 4711. Eau de Cologne

Looking Your Best

All eyes will be turned to the bride. Possibly the excitement of the moment may cause a temporary loss of composure that detracts from charm. A little "4711" Eau de Cologne sprinkled on the handkerchief and inhaled will quickly restore those delightful attributes that provoke the assembled to exclaim "How beautiful she looks."

For the Honeymoon Trip don't forget to take a bottle of "4711" Eau de Cologne. A few drops in the toilet basin will speedily restore freshness after long motor or railway journeys.

Ask for "4711"
(BLUE AND GOLD LABEL)

GUARANTEED PURITY
FULL STRENGTH and
LASTING FRAGRANCE.

Obtainable of all Dealers in High-Class Perfumes.

"CHARM"

Woman's sweetest attribute

Charm in the olden days was denoted by exquisite freshness and purity of complexion, and is so to-day in spite of changed circumstances, necessitating greater care of the skin and the regular cleansing of the pores with ***Pond's Cold Cream.*** This cream beautifies because it promotes skin health. It helps to ward off the lines and wrinkles which time and care pencil round the mouth and eyes.

Pond's Vanishing Cream—a day cream of undoubted excellence—revivifies tired complexions and makes the skin delightfully soft and supple.

"TO SOOTHE AND SMOOTH YOUR SKIN."

Obtainable from all chemists and stores in jars at **1/3** *and* **2/6**, *and in tubes at* **7½d.** *(hand-bag size) and* **1/-**. *The Cold Cream, in extra large tubes,* **2/6.**

FREE SAMPLES.
Pond's Extract Co. will send on receipt of 3d. in stamps for postage and packing, a sample tube of Vanishing Cream and Cold Cream containing a liberal supply.

POND'S EXTRACT CO., 71, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

Pond's Cold Cream

OLD HATS MADE NEW

and REMODELLED TO PRESENT FASHION

Send us your old Hat and we will thoroughly clean, renovate, and remodel it to any shape you desire at a cost of **2/9** to **4/3.** (Free Catalogue of 80 fashionable shapes on application.)

SEND YOUR HAT NOW.

Re-dyeing black, navy, or nigger, **1/6** extra. Gent's hats renovated, **4/6** each. Satisfaction or money returned.

Dyeing and Dry Cleaning

We can send your Suit, Costume, Dress or Overcoat back like new in 3 days.

Dry Cleaning and Pressing **6/6**
Dyeing **10/6**

A. WRIGHT Dept. 20 **ALBERT RD LUTON**

A Revolution in Aids for the DEAF

All that is seen of the Reciever.

The smallest & lightest receiver in the World

THE EARLUX MICROMEGA

Receiver weighs only ¼ oz., rests and is retained comfortably in the ear, and entirely does away with the use of a head-band. Not a tube or a so-called non-head attachment, but an actual receiver.

This remarkable new invention is indeed a revelation to the deaf. With it they can hear the whole world of sound.

Highly appreciated by leading aurists at the recent London Medical Exhibition.

Call for demonstrations or write for particulars of 7 days' free trial to—

DEAF APPLIANCE COMPANY, LTD.
(Dept. "S.M."), 58-60, Wigmore St., London, W.1.
Sole Agents for Scotland: **Miss Etta Shankland, 62, Buchanan St., Glasgow**

"Nature alone won't wave the hair, Hinde's Wavers, too, must do their share."

HINDE'S HAIR WAVERS are supplied in 26 different patterns. Crude imitations which are hurtful to the hair may be sometimes offered. It is necessary to see that the name HINDE'S is on each article. Obtainable at all stores, hairdressers and drapery houses.

SAMPLE WAVER 8d. POST FREE.

Hindes', Limited, Manufacturers of Hair Brushes and Articles for the Dressing Table. 1, Tabernacle Street, London, E.C. Works, Birmingham.

See the small Red OSMAN Tab on one corner of each Towel.

The keenest critic is your boy . . .

The boy whose interest is all "outdoors" votes heavily in favour of "OSMAN" Towels.

The heavy, *lively* terry gives the rub his skin delights in. It brings a glow without any harshness or irritation.

As the towel comes back from the wash, time and time again, you will realise that the whiteness and softness are there to stay. The firm, close weave resists constant washing.

Made in all sizes at *ordinary* towel prices, from Drapers, Stores etc.

OSMAN

TOWELS AND BATH-SHEETS

If you are pleased with OSMAN Towels ask your Draper for OSMAN Sheets and Pillow Cases.

℗10

A Gay & Cosy Wrap for Summer Wear

After Tennis; on the River; sitting Outdoors in the cool of the evening; Motoring; or on Holiday —*whenever* a gay-coloured, light and fleecy wrap is required, an Otterburn Woollie-wrap is "just the thing." See an "Otterburn" and you will want to possess one for yourself. In the extensive Otterburn Range there is most surely a colour harmony to suit *your* taste. The moment you handle an Otterburn Woollie-wrap, you will appreciate its honest worth, its fleecy lightness and cosy warmth.

The extreme care with which each Otterburn Scarf is woven, the "fastness" of its colours and the pure, new, long staple wool employed in its manufacture give the "Otterburn" a character all its own. Wear it as hard as you like—wash it again and again—an "Otterburn" will still retain its fresh fleeciness and bright colour harmony.

The Otterburn Woollie-wrap is but one of the Otterburn products, famed since their birth 102 years ago for sheer goodness and integrity of manufacture—and here is the Otterburn Guarantee:—If any Otterburn product which you buy does not completely charm and satisfy you, we will refund your money—in full.

Look for the silk-woven "Otterburn" tab on every Woollie-wrap

The Otterburn Woollie-wrap

Two Sizes: 80" x 27", **19/11**; and 65" x 18", **13/6**
In addition to the two sizes mentioned above, there is a third and *smaller* size (60" x 10", **6/11**) specially made for those who prefer the ordinary Scarf-size and following the same colour-schemes as the more generous-sized Wraps. Ask your Draper to show you the Otterburn Scarves. If you have any difficulty we will send one direct to any address, securely packed and post free, for price as above.

How to be *sure* of getting an "Otterburn"

Though many Drapers and other Ladies' Outfitters all over the country now stock Otterburn Scarves, it may happen that you are unable to buy one in your district. In this case, please write direct to Otterburn Mill, Ltd., for our descriptive Brochure. The Brochure shows, in actual colours, the full range of twelve beautiful designs. It shows you, too, how to order *safely* through the post the particular "Otterburn" that will harmonise perfectly with *your* outdoor attire.

When ordering your Wrap direct from Brochure, please give name and address of local Dealer from whom you would have purchased your "Otterburn"—had stocks been held.

OTTERBURN MILL, LTD.,
Otterburn Bridge, Northumberland

Consider the figure of fashion.

The slim silhouette is hers—if she but bathes daily with perfumed salts.

NO longer need one despair over desired slenderness, since Mrs. Hemming, the world-famed Beauty Authority of Cyclax Salons, has provided Cyclax Violet Ray Reducing Bath Salts. They diminish superfluous flesh by *natural* methods.

Only a handful of these pleasant, lavender-perfumed salts is needed in the daily hot bath, unless overweight is stubborn, when an extra quantity is required. Even with the first hot bath a difference in weight can be noticed. No other aid needed. No necessity for special diet or to take internal remedies.

Further, these harmless, special salts relieve rheumatism and acidity.

A&PS-6

"Cyclax"
VIOLET RAY REDUCING
BATH SALTS
Price 7/6 per bottle, sufficient for 12 baths.
Post free in United Kingdom. Obtainable from High-Class Chemists, Stores & Hairdressers. Write for complimentary copy of Mrs. Hemming's practical book, "The Cultivation and Preservation of Natural Beauty."
"CYCLAX" (Mrs. Hemming), 13 & 14 (F), New Bond St., and 58 (F), South Molton St., W.1.
Vickers, Wilson & Co., 24, Chowringhee, CALCUTTA.

Make *your* Hair your chief attraction

PEOPLE glance at your hair and often judge you by its beauty. Keep it always at its loveliest by regularly shampooing with AMAMI, the Shampoo preferred by many famous and lovely women.

Loveliness of hair is not dependent on expensive and tedious treatments, but upon a clear understanding of the one simple law which governs hair-health—*scrupulous cleanliness.*

AMAMI is the perfectly balanced Shampoo which cleanses thoroughly, the one Shampoo you ought to use whether your hair trouble is excessive grease or excessive dryness—for both troubles spring from a similar cause and both are rectified by cleansing regularly with AMAMI Shampoos. Shampoo *weekly* if the hair is greasy, *fortnightly* if it is dry.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE AMAMI SHAMPOO THAT IS BEST SUITED TO YOUR HAIR:

AMAMI HENNA SHAMPOO *imparts to brown hair of every shade the fascinating glint that is its greatest charm.*

AMAMI ALMOND OIL SHAMPOO *is a delightfully fragrant Shampoo suitable for all shades of hair, specially prepared to give nourishment to dry and brittle hair, without loading it with objectionable greasiness.*

All the London Stores, Boots, Taylor's, Timothy White's and the leading Chemists and Hairdressers throughout the world sell AMAMI Shampoos—6d. per sachet, containing sufficient for two or three luxurious shampoos.

AMAMI CAMOMILE *enhances the fairness of fair hair—restores the brightness to hair that has become dull and lifeless.*

AMAMI SHAMPOOS impart to the hair a delicate lingering fragrance.

The photograph above is of Miss Kathleen **AMAMI** chosen in the recent **AMAMI** Stage Career Scheme and now appearing in the chorus of "London Calling" at the Duke of York's.

SEND FOR THIS SAMPLE CASKET OF AMAMI BEAUTY AIDS

Send 2/- (in stamps or P.O.) for Sample Casket A15, which is representative of the full series of AMAMI Beauty Aids, Soap, Perfume, Powder, Skin Food, etc.—including a full size 6d. AMAMI Shampoo Sachet.

PRICHARD & CONSTANCE, COURT PERFUMERS SINCE 1840. **HAYMARKET, LONDON**

AMĀMĬ Shampoos

"Waukeezi"

-and feel the joys of Spring

In Cool "Aertex" lined Shoes 30/-

Aertex lining, only to be obtained in Waukeezi Shoes, ensures cool, comfortable feet, however hot the weather, however much you walk. It's the crowning touch to Waukeezi supple leather and perfect fit. Well-dressed men will wear *Shoes* this Summer. Ask to see Waukeezi No. 363—they're a treat you owe your feet.

You can get Waukeezi for men and women at good boot shops. Or write for illustrated catalogue to Central Agency, 60 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4. West End Agents: Messrs. W. Abbott & Sons, Ltd., Regent Street, W.1. Waukeezi Shoes are on exhibition at Wembley.

WAUKEEZI SHOE COMPANY, NORTHAMPTON

John Marlow & Sons, Ltd.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

A great Novelty in Clocks. Beautiful Swiss Carved Cases. Simple construction.

Size 12 by 8½ inches.

Post free to any part of the British Isles **55/-**

CUCKOO CLOCKS

There's a charm about these clocks which is quite their own. They make ideal presents for all occasions and are excellent timekeepers.

Every hour and half-hour the little bird opens his door, flaps his wings and announces the time of day in clear, melodious tones—an exact reproduction of a real Cuckoo. The Youngsters are delighted! Everyone satisfied!

CAMERER CUSS & CO. (Dept. B), 56, New Oxford Street, LONDON, W.C.

Estd. 1788. *Catalogues Free.*

A WORD TO PARENTS

It is always difficult to choose exactly the right school, precisely the best training college for your girls and your boys, but you will find your difficulties in this respect considerably less if you study the school and college announcements on page 49.

IRISH LINEN

HUCKABACK FACE TOWELS

ROBINSON & CLEAVER'S manufacture their own Linen in Ulster and offer some special values in :—

LINEN TOWELS.

S.M. 624 — Grass Bleached Irish Linen Huck Face Towels, white or coloured borders, hemmed ends.
20 × 30 in. .. .. **6 for 10/-**

LINEN TOWELLING.

S.M. 625—Pure Linen Huckaback, suitable for Club, Hand, Lavatory, or Roller Towels. Exceptional value.
18 in. wide, **1/3** yd. ... 24 in. wide, **1/9** yd.

Illustrated List No. 36L sent post free. Delivery of parcels guaranteed and Carriage Paid on all Orders of 20/- upwards in the United Kingdom.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER LTD

Linen Manufacturers

BELFAST N. IRELAND

RECENT STREET, LONDON & CHURCH STREET, LIVERPOOL.

Make This Test

You'll like the results

We ask you to try a new method of teeth cleaning. The test is free. It will show you results which everyone desires.

Combats the film

This method combats the film on teeth—that viscous film you feel. That is the teeth's great enemy.

Despite the tooth brush, much of it clings and stays. Soon it discolours, then forms dingy coats. That is why teeth lose lustre.

Film also holds food substance which ferments and forms acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth and the acid may cause decay.

Now you can daily combat that film. Dental science has found two ways. One acts to disintegrate the film, the other to remove it without harmful scouring.

When these methods were proved to be effective, a new-type tooth paste was created to apply them daily. The name is Pepsodent. Homes of fifty nations now employ it, largely by dental advice.

Protect the Enamel

Pepsodent disintegrates the film, then removes it with an agent far softer than enamel. Never use a film combatant which contains harsh grit.

Also fruit effects

Pepsodent also applies certain fruit effects to teeth. It multiplies the alkalinity of the saliva, which is there to neutralize mouth acids. It multiplies the starch digestant in the saliva, which is there to digest starch deposits on teeth.

See the benefits

Send the coupon for a 10-Day Tube. Note how clean the teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth become whiter as the film-coats disappear.

You will be delighted, and the results may bring you priceless benefits. Cut out coupon now.

Pepsodent TRADE MARK

The New-Day Dentifrice

Now advised by leading dentists the world over.

Colonial Addresses :—
***Australia**—137, Clarence St., Sydney, N.S.W.: **Canada**—191, George St., Toronto: **S. Africa**—P.O. Box 6824, Johannesburg.*
Readers resident in these countries may send coupon to above branches.

1365

10-DAY TUBE FREE

THE PEPSODENT COMPANY,
(Dept. 131), 42, Southwark Bridge Road, London, S.E.1.

Mail 10-Day Tube of Pepsodent to—

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Give full address. Write plainly.
Only one tube to a family.

STRAND MAG./JUNE.

Quality tells long after the price is forgotten

London Made 18 Ct. Solid Gold **SIGNET RINGS** in a variety of Up-to-date designs PRICES 35/- TO £3 3/- *Sold by Weight*

22 Carat Guinea Gold **WEDDING RINGS** Half Round Section PRICES 20/- TO £3 3 *Sold by Weight*

10,000 Rings on show in our windows. Have a selection sent to your home on approval.

Our Illustrated Ring Book post free

Any Ring shown can be supplied with larger or smaller stones. Prices accordingly

A few of our latest designs in 18 Carat Solid Gold **GEM SET RINGS** Super Finish PRICES £3 TO £20 *according to Size of Stone*

Bravingtons LTD.

296-298 PENTONVILLE ROAD, KINGS CROSS, N.1.
OPEN SATURDAY TILL 8.30 P.M.

71, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.4. CLOSED SATURDAY 1 P.M.

A. K. Co., Ltd.

DULCITONE

(Regd.)

The Harp-Toned Light-Weight Piano that never needs Tuning

In this delightful instrument, with keys and touch like a good piano, the sounds are produced by tuning-forks, which are unaffected by extremes of heat and cold. The Dulcitone makes a very desirable instrument for an evening's music by the fireside, an impromptu concert and dance, for children practising, or for school use. It weighs only 60 lbs., and can easily be moved about from place to place.

Price **£25** *net cash.*

Terms: £4 down, and 11 monthly payments of £2.

It is an invaluable instrument for the Colonies or abroad.

THOMAS MACHELL & SONS, 49, Great Western Rd., Glasgow. 1B♆

EDISON BELL *Velvet Face* RECORDS

EDISON BELL commenced the fashion for NATURAL TONE RECORDING—others, convinced by the wonderful results secured on V.F.'s, are striving to follow, but the V.F. still maintains the lead.

TATIANA MAKUSHINA (Soprano)
12-inch ...Green Label..... Price 5/6
574 { **Agnus Dei** (With Violin, Flute and Piano Accpt.) *Bizet* / **Le Nil** *Leroux*

JOHN DUNN (Violin)
10-inch .....Green Label.....Price 3/6
1089 { **Aria on the G String**—*Bach* / **Obertass Mazurka**—*Wieniawski*

BAND OF H.M. SCOTS GUARDS
Bandmaster: Lt. F. W. Wood.
10-inch Violet Label..... Price 3/-
1086 { **No. 1. March** / **No. 2. Song without Words** } 2nd Military Band Suite —*Gustav Holst*
1087 { **No. 3. Song of the Blacksmith** / **No. 4. Fantasia on the Dargason** }

NORMAN WILLIAMS (Basso-Cantante)
12-inch ..... Green Label ..... Price 5/6
575 { **Hear me, ye winds and waves**—**SCIPIO**—*Handel* / **Love that's true will live for ever**—**BERENICE**—*Handel*

There is over 30 years' reputation behind the name of Edison Bell.

Use "Chromic" Needles on all your Records.

Ask your Dealer for Catalogue, or write to J. E. HOUGH, Ltd., 62A, Glengall Road, London, S.E.15.

Perfect Musical Reflection

Your Food is in Constant Danger

How many illnesses in your household have been due to flies? It's hard to know, just as it's hard to know when next it may happen.

Flies are the great disease-carriers. They are hatched in filth, eat filth, revel in filth.

Then they light on your food.

If you put a fly under a microscope you would see that its legs are covered with tiny sticky hairs, befouled with countless filthy germs, and that its droppings reek with loathsome microbes. Every time a fly touches your food, even for an instant, germs are left on the food, to menace the health, may-be the very life, of those who eat at your table.

Fly-blown food is poisoned, germ-ridden food. Miltonised food is *safe* food.

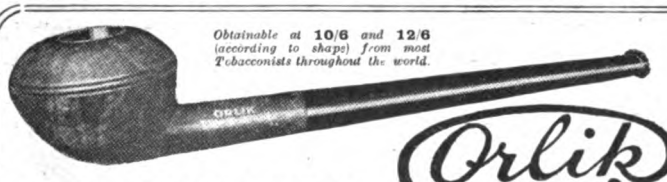
Milton does not poison germs—it could not possibly poison anything. It simply dissolves germs—as it dissolves dirt—instantaneously. Simply add a little Milton (a tablespoonful to each pint) to the water in which you wash or soak the fresh meat, fish, poultry, or vegetables. Then you and yours are safe. And Milton has positively no effect on the taste, while it makes food keep longer in hot weather.

Of all chemists, 1/6 or 2/6.

MILTON

TRADE MARK

For 101 *uses in the Home*



Obtainable at **10/6** *and* **12/6** *(according to shape) from most Tobacconists throughout the world.*

Orlik

"BY REQUEST"

I have designed this unique shape.

The Pipe is long (six inches) with a flat-style bowl. Like the elongated Cigarette-holder it is preferred by writing men and all who smoke while working. It is now obtainable in Bruyère Antique quality. The beautifully grained Briar root, specially selected for its compactness, is subjected to an exclusive heating and drying process that drives out all moisture from the bowl—right from the first pipeful you'll find it smoke perfectly. See that every pipe is plainly stamped '**ORLIK**'—none other is genuine.

Trade enquiries to **L. ORLIK** (Est. 1869), **62, BARBICAN, LONDON, E.C.1.**

Shrewd Judges smoke Orlik Pipes

AQUASCUTUM
'FIELD' COATS
Waterproof & Windproof

3½ *to* 5 Gns.

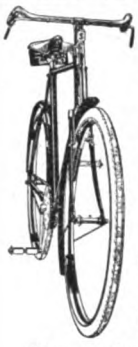
MENTION OF THIS PAPER WILL BRING AQUASCUTUM CATALOGUE BY RETURN OF POST

Aquascutum Ltd. 126 REGENT ST. LONDON, W.1

Sole makers of Aquascutum & Eiderscutum Coats

SWIFT
points the way!

NOT only to a simple method of obtaining the "World's Best Bicycle," it also points the way to healthful exercise and pleasure—and for years after it has paid for itself out of the fares it will save you, the Swift will continue to give you both in generous measure.



Prices from £7 : 10 : 0 cash, or 11/4 per month.

Write for fuller particulars and illustrated catalogue to :

Dept. 1,
SWIFT OF COVENTRY, LTD.,
COVENTRY,
or to Dept. 1B, London Depot, 133, Long Acre, W.C.2.

For 5p a day you ride as you pay!

PATTERNS SENT POST FREE

PLUS FOURS AND SPORTS SUITS

Cut to Measure.

A splendid assortment of every kind of material for every sport.

Plus Fours - 21/-
Jackets - 50/6

Satisfaction guaranteed from your own measures or cash refunded.

Dept. B.,

BEDFORD RIDING BREECHES CO.
Sports Tailors (*E. Turner, Ltd.*) Established 1908.
19, NEW QUEBEC ST., MARBLE ARCH, LONDON, W.1.

A Smart Sole for City wear.

¶ With Phillips 'PRESIDENT' Soles, shoes are kept in that smart, elegant condition usually associated with new shoes only. They preserve the shape by preventing the upper becoming strained. That means *long life to the shoes.*

Phillips 'President'
Light Rubber Soles - - Invisible

SOLES :
Men's - 3/-
Ladies' - 2/
per pair.

The "Abbott" Service

DELIGHTFUL SUMMER
LIGHTWEIGHTS
LIKE WALKING ON AIR

Made on the Hand-Sewn Principle.
Long-Wearing Hand-Hammered Soles.

These Shoes are equal in appearance and comfort to Bond Street Bespoke models at double the price.

Stocked in

PATENT LEATHER,
TAN WILLOW CALF,
BLACK BOX CALF,
BLACK GLACE KID,
GREY SUEDE CALF,
NIGGER SUEDE CALF

29/9

Postage 9d.
BOOTS AT SAME PRICE.

SINGLE SHOE SENT ON APPROVAL
for careful inspection to any address in the United Kingdom. If remittance is sent for a pair, money returned if not approved.

FOR OVERSEAS ORDERS
take advantage of the Post Office Cash on Delivery purchasing facilities. 5/- deposit required with order. Where this is not available you can safely send full amount, as we return all monies if you are not perfectly satisfied. **Overseas Postage 3/-**

WRITE FOR ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE

W. ABBOTT & SONS, Ltd. (PHIT-EESI)

Post Dept., 60, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C. Also on Sale at

7, POULTRY, CITY
24, LIVERPOOL ST., CITY
166A, FENCHURCH ST., E.C.
98, KENSINGTON HIGH ST.
54, REGENT ST., W.
121, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.
434, STRAND, W.C.2
145, STRAND, W.C.
239, BROMPTON RD.
458, HOLLOWAY RD., N.
121, VICTORIA ST., S.W.
85, BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD.
131A, QUEEN'S RD., BAYSWATER
65, GEORGE ST., RICHMOND.

New Branch: 36-38, GT. CHARLOTTE ST., LIVERPOOL.
Principal Paris Branch: 38, BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS.

CAUTION.—See the name "Fox" on the metal discs (right and left) attached to every genuine pair of Fox's New Non-Fray Spiral Puttees.

The Ladies' Puttee

For walking, climbing, shooting and generally getting about in the country under all conditions, Fox's Spat Puttees for ladies are becoming increasingly popular. Especially because of their smartness—glove-like spiral fit, non-fray edges, and a delightful range of colour shades.

	per pair
For Ladies	
Extra Fine Quality, without Spats	9/6
Extra Fine Quality { with fixed Spats	14/6
Extra Fine Quality { detachable Spats	15/6
Superfine Quality, Bright Art Shades, without Spats	16/-
For Men	
Regulation Heavy-weight, without Spats	10/-
Tropical Weight, without Spats	10/-
Extra Fine Light-weight, mixture Shades, without Spats	12/-
Extra Fine Light-weight, solid Shades, without Spats	13/-
Extra Fine Spat Puttees { adjustable	16/-
Extra Fine Spat Puttees { detachable	17/-

Ask your Retailer for Fox's Puttees

FOX BROTHERS & CO., LTD. (Dept. F), Wellington, Somerset.
M3 Agents for U.S.A., The Manley Johnson Corporation, 260, West Broadway, New York.

FOX'S F.I.P. PUTTEES

More important than any item of dress-

is the ornament every woman should wear on her head—a crown of healthy, rippling hair.

You can get and keep this charm with West Electric Hair Curlers. Even expert hairdressers find their art more easy and effective where clients, between calls for special treatment or coiffure, use West Electric Hair Curlers consistently at home.

No heat, electric current, or chemicals required. West Electric Hair Curlers are highly magnetised. They cannot possibly burn, break, or injure the hair. Ten minutes' occasional use promotes a life, sheen, and wavy fullness that you have never experienced without them. Their positive beneficial action will amaze you.

Millions of users who were formerly sensitive about the appearance of their hair have gratefully attested the wonderful value of these magic little wavers.

WEST ELECTRIC Hair Curlers

6d. The card of 2 — *The name is on the genuine* — **1/-** The card of 4

Money cheerfully refunded if not more than charmed with the results. Get them to-day from your hairdresser, draper, or chemist, or direct by return of post from the WEST ELECTRIC HAIR CURLER CO., LTD. (Dept. 43), 8, Kirby Street, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.1, on receipt of price.

COMPLETE CLOTHING CABINET

GET OUR CATALOGUE

KON-TAYN-AL

Six movable shelves for Hats, Underwear, etc. Pull-out rack, holds 12 Suits. Replaces both Wardrobe and Chest of Drawers. Three distinct compartments. Packs up flat. Dimensions 5ft. 9ins. by 3ft. 8ins. by 1ft. 9ins.

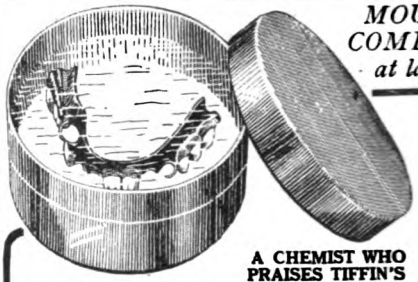
Carriage Paid in U.K.

£4:17:6

With plain Curtains. Fancy Curtains, 3/6 extra.

Ten Days' Trial. Money back if not delighted.

THE KON-TAYN-AL CO., 284, Empire House, 175, Piccadilly, London, W.1



MOUTH COMFORT at last!

A CHEMIST WHO PRAISES TIFFIN'S

DENTABATH

writes:—". . . my wife finds the Bath pleasant, and it gives the teeth a freshness that is most agreeable." . . . and it does! It cleanses and purifies artificial teeth, removes the "fur" (which is really a mass of living bacteria), and makes the Dentures smooth and pleasing to the mouth. Further, the disinfectant soothes and strengthens the gums. The DENTABATH gives 12 months' service. Add water, that's all. Buy one to-day at your Chemist's. **4/6**

Money back if not fully satisfied.

Or **4/10** post free from Makers, **TIFFIN'S DENTABATH, LTD., 37p, KING STREET, SOUTH SHIELDS.**

Wholesale: Warrick Bros., 6, Nile Street, City Road, London.

FREE SAMPLES

OF

SPHAGNOL TOILET PREPARATIONS

IF you desire to have a clear and beautiful complexion, and lovely hair, send to-day for free samples of this wonderful cream and other Sphagnol aids to perfect skin health and loveliness. Sphagnol Toilet Cream is a wonderful new production with all the fresh, invigorating atmosphere of the peat moors in it.

Sphagnol Soaps and Ointment are also invaluable in relieving and curing Acne, Alopecia, Anal Fissure, Blepharitis, Dermatitis, Eczema, Erysipelas, Hemorrhoids, Impetigo, Insect Bites, Prickly Heat, Pruritus, Psoriasis, Falling Hair, Scabies, Septic Wounds, Urticaria, Burns, etc.

PEAT PRODUCTS (SPHAGNOL), Ltd., W.4 Dept., 18/19, Queenhithe, London, E.C.4.

Those First Grey Hairs!

IT'S the first few greying strands that herald the approach of age. Such greyness you can avoid, and preserve a youthful appearance by the timely use of NUCTONE.

NUCTONE will restore the normal colour to your hair gradually, permanently and without embarrassment. It is a scientific preparation which acts in conjunction with light and air. NUCTONE is equally efficacious on a full head of hair as with a few grey strands, and is guaranteed harmless.

Nuctone *for* **GREY HAIR**

NUCTONE for dark and medium hair.
NUCTONE ECLAIRE for fair and auburn shades.
NUCTONE CONCENTRE for gentlemen's hair.

Obtainable from all Chemists, Hairdressers and Stores, **3/9** and **6/6** per bottle. Postage (inland) 6d., or from:—

J. STEWART LTD.,
80, New Bond Street, London, W.1.

The Home Beautiful.

RESIST TROPICAL SUN **"Sunpruf"** SEA AIR AND WASHING
UNFADABLE FABRICS

THE Original Famous Fabrics with a world-wide reputation bearing testimonials from India that the colours are equal to new after many years' exposure.

"SUN-VEIN" CASEMENT CLOTH, 33 Shades. Creams from 1/3½. Colours from 1/11½ per yd.
"SUN-SYRIAN" CASEMENT CLOTH. The effect of Silk but better wear. Creams, 2/11½ per yd. Colours, 3/11½ per yd.
"SUN-VARA" BOLTON SHEETING in new and original colours, 3/11½ per yd., 50 ins. wide. Creams, 2/11½ per yd.
"SUN-PRUF" PRINTED CASEMENT CLOTHS & CRETONNES, from 2/9 per yd.
"SUN-VIE" TWILL. Soft hanging fabric, 4/11 per yd., 50 ins.
"SUN-BRIGHT" SATIN, in beautiful shades, 6/9 per yd., 50 ins.
"SUN-GLEAM" REP. Decorative Fabric, 6/11 per yd., 50 ins.

ALL Fabrics prefixed with the word "SUN" are guaranteed Unfadable. Any length failing to meet this guarantee will be replaced.

Williamson & Cole
HIGH STREET, CLAPHAM S.W.4 LTD

Yardley's Old English Lavender Soap

Lavishly perfumed, it brings to the Toilet the clean fresh fragrance of the English Lavender Garden.

Exquisitely pure, its soft, mellow lather is a caress to the skin, leaving it cleansed, refined, and beautified.

PRICE PER BOX OF THREE LARGE TABLETS
3/-

Of all Chemists, Perfumers, and Stores.

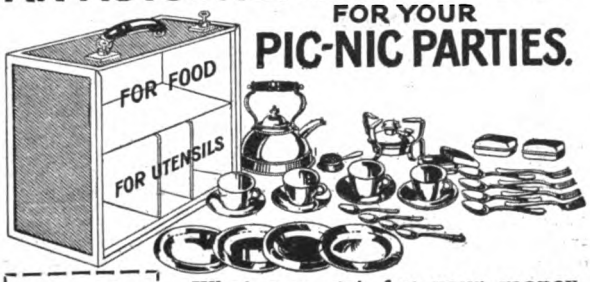
By Appointment.

YARDLEY & CO., Ltd., 8, New Bond St., London.

AN ASTOUNDING BARGAIN!

FOR YOUR

PIC-NIC PARTIES.



35/-

POST FREE

Same Cabinet equipped for 2 persons,

26/-

Any other desired size promptly quoted for.

What you get for your money

Strong handsome cabinet.

Size as follows: Length 18½ in. Depth 14½ in. Width 9½ in.

Also	
1 Spirit Stove	4 Teaspoons
1 Quick-boiling Kettle	4 Forks
4 Plates	1 Butter Box
4 Cups and Saucers	1 Tea Box
4 Tablespoons	1 Sugar Box
	29 articles *and* cabinet

All good quality, highly polished Aluminium-ware. Illustration at right shows sliding lid almost shut. One person carries the cabinet with ease.

OUR MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE: If not delighted after inspection full postage and purchase money refunded upon return of article in good condition.

Honestly worth £5 : 5 : 0

WHO does not know the joys of the open country? By rail, cycle, or car we'll go a-picnicking—all to spend care-free days out-of-doors this Summer.

You are here offered an exceptional combination of value, quality, durability and strength at an amazingly low price. The case is of unsplittable, light-weight wood, mahogany stained and polished (or with silver birch finish), edged with aluminium, riveted for extra strength. Fitted with two double-action spring locks and stout leather handle. The stove is a simple methylated spirit burner. All the articles illustrated are included. Send for this bargain case to-day and be ready for a real treat at the earliest opportunity. Send for catalogue of the Tourists' Picnic Cabinets for 2, 4, or 6 persons, and other lines.

The "COOPER-Val" PICNIC CABINETS

The COOPER COLLAPSIBLE BOX CO., LTD. (Dept. DP2), Clarendon Works, HULL.

Britannic and Best

See the name "Britannic" is engraved inside the band, because very inferior imitations are shown as "Britannic" Bracelets by unscrupulous dealers.

THE "Britannic" Expanding Bracelet has made an unrivalled world-wide reputation for its durability and the charm of its various designs. These bands are fully guaranteed for five years, and the springs will be renewed, free of charge, any time during that period, through any jeweller.

The "Britannic" may be seen at all good-class jewellers complete with watches in various styles from £4 10s. Also "Britannic" Expanding Bands alone with hooks, to replace straps.

The Queen of Watch Bracelets

"KATAKILLA"

POWDER INSECTICIDE WASH.

FOR SPRAYING FRUIT FLOWERS VEGETABLES

CERTAIN DEATH TO GREEN-FLY CATERPILLARS And all other Insect Pests.

"KATAKILLA" is in powder form, ready for mixing with water. Easy to use. No complicated preparation.

Sold in **2/-** Cartons, each sufficient for 10 galls.
And **6/-** ,, ,, ,, ,, 50 ,,
by Seedsmen, etc., or direct from

McDOUGALL & ROBERTSON, Ltd.,
66/68, Port Street, MANCHESTER.

ENJOY YOUR SHAVE

instead of making it a bugbear. If you use the handy, easy-shaving little Mab—shaving troubles will disappear. Instead you will get a luxurious, smooth and safe shave such as is possible with no other Razor. A million men in all parts of the world use the Mab. 30 years' reputation.

Finest Sheffield Steel.

PRICES:
DWARF SIZE **4/6**
MEDIUM **5/6**

Pairs in Case—Black, 12/6 & 14/6; Ivory, 20/6 & 22/6.
Mab Tension Strop, 3/6. Booklet on Shaving free on request.
Of all Cutlers, etc., or post free from—
MAB CO., 73A, Newhall Street, BIRMINGHAM.

ATCO SPECIALITIES

If you own Turf you need the

ATCO *MOTOR* **MOWER**
ATCO *TURF* **CULTIVATOR**
ATCO *TURF-REPLACING* **WEEDER**

Write for Illustrated Booklet No 48.

CHAS. H. PUGH LTD. TILTON ROAD **BIRMINGHAM**

Happy reflections

No. 2. The Dancing Lesson.

There's to be a party next Saturday—Marjorie's birthday. She herself is to take the floor in a little dance to the music of "The Spring Song," and she will recite her favourite piece—"I have a little shadow." She is forever drawing attention to her "shadow" in the furniture and on the floor. Of course, by "shadow" she means "reflection."

Mother uses O-Cedar Polish, and Marjorie sees her reflection everywhere in the house, for everything is so bright and mirror-like. No dry, dusty, dullness: a radiant, gleaming surface everywhere the O-Cedar way.

BRITISH MADE BY BRITISH LABOUR
Sold all over the world with a satisfaction-or-money-back guarantee.

O-Cedar Polish

Ask your Dealer to show you the new model O-Cedar Polish Mop with interchangeable clip handle.

PRICES FROM 1/3 (4 oz.) TO 12/6 (1 gallon).

Write for Free Sample of O-Cedar Wax.

THE CHANNELL CHEMICAL CO., LTD., SLOUGH, BUCKS.

Cathedral
THE SHOE FOR YOU

When you see Gentlemen wearing smart and snappy Footwear think of

Cathedral
OR
MASTER
BRANDS

THE SHOES FOR YOU

Made by Northampton craftsmen, with finest quality materials

THE BACKS FIT LIKE A GLOVE

ASK YOUR BOOT RETAILER FOR THEM

MASTER
HAS NO EQUAL

"THE EFFICIENT MIND"

Free Book Which Everyone Should Read.

A most interesting book has been published which everyone who wishes to "get on" in life should read.

It is entitled "The Efficient Mind," and contains a full description of the New Pelmanism which is enabling so many thousands of people to increase their Earning-Power, to win Promotion to higher positions, and to double their Efficiency.

Pelmanism rapidly removes such defects as

Forgetfulness	Mind Wandering
Brain-Fag	Timidity
Inertia	Lack of System
Weakness of Will	Procrastination
Lack of Ideas	Indecision
Indefiniteness	Shyness

which diminish the working power of the brain, and it develops such valuable qualities as:

—Concentration	**—Resourcefulness**
—Observation	**—Organizing Power**
—Perception	**—Directive Ability**
—Judgment	**—Self-Confidence**
—Initiative	**—Self-Control**
—Will-Power	**—Tact**
—Decision	**—Reliability**
—Ideation	**—Salesmanship**

and a Reliable Memory

all qualities of the utmost practical use in life.

INCOMES DOUBLED.

Every day letters reach the Pelman Institute from men and women who have doubled their earning-powers and won other valuable advantages as the result of taking a Course of Pelmanism. Here are a few typical examples:

A Manager reports that he has doubled his income.

An Engineer states that he has secured a better position.

A Clerk writes that he has doubled his salary.

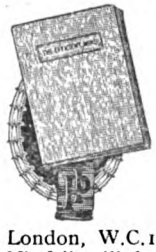
A Salesman reports "My salary is double what it was."

A Dental Surgeon writes "My income has doubled itself."

An Accountant states "I have been promoted twice in twelve months."

A Lieut.-Colonel reports "Promotion has certainly been accelerated."

Many more examples will be found in "The Efficient Mind." Every reader who wishes to make the fullest use of his or her mental powers should get a copy of this book to-day.



This book shows you how, by devoting a few minutes daily to a simple course of scientific Mind-Training, you can develop just those qualities which will enable you to succeed in life.

Just write to-day to the Pelman Institute, 22, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1, and a copy of "The Efficient Mind" will be sent to you by return, gratis and post free.

Branches: PARIS, 35, Rue Boissy d'Anglas; NEW YORK, 2,575, Broadway; MELBOURNE, 396, Flinders Lane; DURBAN, Natal Bank Chambers; DELHI, 10, Alipore Road.

PATENT
HERACLES
HERACLES FOR NIGHTS OF EASE
MATTRESS

The Heracles Mattress is built to take great strains without affecting its construction. Underneath there are 24 helical springs anchored to three specially constructed pieces of woven wire, which makes it anti-sag. These strong, sensitive springs (each tested to a tensile strain of 75 lb.) respond to every movement of the body, enabling two people to sleep as comfortably as upon separate beds.

Illustrated Booklet, "Heracles for Nights of Ease," free from

E. HORACE HOLME, LTD.,
Dept. S,
Holmoak Works, HOLLOWAY, N.7.

FROM ALL GOOD FURNISHERS.

Made in any size.

84/- 4'6" wide.
80/- 3' wide.

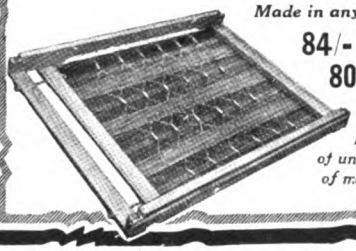


Photo of underside of mattress.

Clean Table Cloths at Every Meal.

Damasclene enables you to bring up your children to enjoy and expect cleanliness in their surroundings. The Nursery Cloth can be perfectly clean at every meal, for the removal of stains is merely a matter of wiping with a damp cloth. Use Damasclene also for Kitchen and Tray Cloths, Shelf and Dresser Covers, etc., and make your home look dainty without the expense of the weekly Laundry Bill for such items.

DAMASCLENE
(*Regd. Trade Mark*)

YOU BUY IT BY THE YARD.

5/11 48-50 in. wide. 4/11 36 in. wide.
Obtainable from Drapers and Stores.

FREE Send postcard for explanatory leaflet D5, SAMPLE, and name of nearest stockist.
NEW PEGAMOID LTD.,
134, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

POTTERYLAND'S GREAT OFFER
of Famous
Barnfield Ware

The "Oxford" Services, in lovely shade of Canton Blue, in thin semi-porcelain.

Dinner Set for 6 persons
Tea Set for 6 persons
Breakfast Set for 6 persons
} The lot reduced from 65/- to 56/-

Packed Free. Carriage Paid.

The Tea and Breakfast Sets are finished in best English Gold. Safe delivery guaranteed. This crate is a great bargain.

Money instantly returned if not satisfied.

FREE

Write now for FREE ART POTTERY Album, beautifully illustrated in colours, and legend of the "Willow Pattern" Plate. Post Free. *Goods shipped to all parts of the world, packed by expert packers. No risk.*

THE FENTON POTTERY CO.
(Dpt. 1), Royal Fenton Works,
Fenton, Staffs.
Established 1901.

DARNING MADE EASY
AN HOUR'S WORK IN A FEW MINUTES

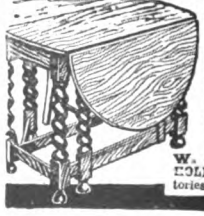
THE "STAR" DARNER is a wonderful automatic hand machine for QUICKLY WEAVING smooth INVISIBLE DARNS in any fabric. Repairs like magic large or small holes in Stockings, Underwear, Silks, Curtains, Table Linen, etc. No more untidy darns. Makes darning a pleasure, saves time and eyestrain — so easy a child can work it. Sent with directions.

REDUCED FROM 2/9 TO 1/9

Special Sale Price, 1/9
Postage 3d. extra.

E. J. R. CO., (Dept. S.M.),
632, HOLLOWAY ROAD,
LONDON, N.19.

JELKS' HIGH-GRADE SECOND-HAND FURNITURE



For CASH or on EASY TERMS.
Half Cost and Double Wear of Cheap New Goods.

Jelks' second-hand furniture comes solely from good-class homes throughout the Kingdom. An ever-changing stock of absorbing interest.

£100,000 WORTH OF STOCK.
500,000 SQ. FT. OF FLOOR SPACE.

Call or write for New Monthly Bargain List.

W. JELKS & SONS, 263—275, HOLLOWAY ROAD, London, N.7. Depositories, 2 to 16, Eden Grove (adjoining).

Lovely New Textures and New Colours

ALLEN'S FADELESS Durobelle

Write NOW for Post Free Patterns

SUMMER SUNSHINE! How it shows up those worn or faded Curtains. Replace them with Durobelle. You will secure delightful effects that will remain fresh and unfaded after several summers, even in tropical climates. Durobelle offers a wonderful range of shades and textures—undoubtedly the finest selection yet produced in guaranteed fadeless fabrics. Introduced seventeen years ago, Durobelle has proved successful in all parts of the world.

New Length Free if Colour Fades

Plain Casement Cloths, in great variety of colours, 28 ins. wide, creams **1/0½**, colours **1/3½**; 31 ins. wide, creams **1/4½**, colours **1/11½**; 50 ins. wide, creams **1/9½**, colours **2/3½** yd.

Heavier Rep Cloths, recommended for hard wear, creams, 30 ins. wide **1/11½**, 50 ins. **2/11½**; colours, 30 ins. **2/3½**, 50 ins. **3/6½** yd.

Satin Stripe Reps, beautiful effects in self stripes, 50 ins. wide, **4/11** yd.

Fancy Trellis Casement Cloth, dainty designs in range of good colours, 50 ins. wide, creams from **3/6,** colours from **4/6** yd.

Bolton Sheeting, nine useful colours, 50 ins. wide, creams **3/3½**, colours **3/11½** yd.

Fine Highly Mercerised Casement, has the appearance of silk, very soft draping, 50 ins. wide, creams **2/9½**, colours **3/3½** yd.

Cover your floors with CORQUET. As serviceable as linoleum, as warm as a carpet, costs less—4/11 sq. yd. Ask for patterns.

Over 200 colour photographs of Durobelle, Cretonnes, Carpets, etc., in "MY LADY'S HOME," Allen's famous furnishing guide. Write for a copy.

J. J. Allen Ltd

Dept. A, BOURNEMOUTH

London Showrooms:
188, Sloane Street, S.W.

All letters to Bournemouth, please.

What a Saving of Time and Expense

is effected by the use of Cash's Wash Ribbons! The washing bugbear — removal and re-threading of ribbons, re-fixing of bows and straps—is completely obviated, and the fast colours can be relied upon to retain their original brilliance.

CASH'S WASH RIBBONS

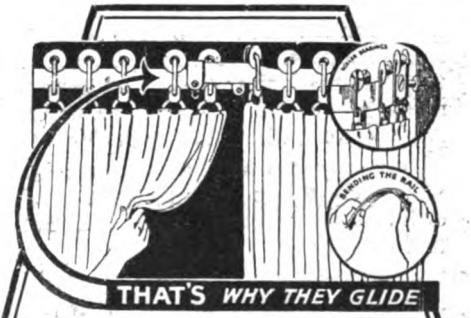
Made in Pink, Blue, Maize, Hello, and White (widths up to one inch).

J. & J. CASH Ltd., Dept. F.2, COVENTRY.

The Cash Envelope of assorted ribbon patterns will be sent post free on request.

Send for Book of uses of CASH'S FRILLINGS, which will be sent free.

TRADE MARK.



THAT'S *WHY THEY GLIDE*

Challenge Patent Rustless Roller Bearing CURTAIN RUNNER

Little roller-bearing runners carrying curtains that "glide at a touch." *That's* the Challenge method of Curtain Hanging and it means longer life to curtains and far more attractive windows. Rail easily bent by hand to fit *any* shape window and fixing is simplicity itself.

Interesting Booklet "S" free.

"CHALLENGE" Patent STAIR CARPET CLIPS

grip the carpet tightly, preventing all movement or sag. Neat, strong, easy to fix and never require cleaning. *Write for Clip Booklet "S."*

CHALCO, LTD.
(Dept. S), Summer Row,
BIRMINGHAM.

B248.—A man's smart shoe of medium weight, cut from glace kid in the comfortable Derby style, with patent cap. Welted.

17/9

How little Smart Shoes *need* cost you!

No need to hesitate at shop windows, wondering why the cheaper shoes cannot look good. For now you can buy by post, *from the actual manufacturers*, these comfortable, reliable, *smart* "Burlington" shoes at the low price of 17/9!

If you could see the way we make "Burlington" footwear you would be astonished that such fine material and workmanship can be put into shoes for so little money.

The secret is "quantity." Our business in 50 years has become the largest in England. To keep our 500 shops supplied we must turn out thousands of pairs a week. This enormous production brings down costs. And—we sell direct to the public.

That is why you will find no footwear value equal to "Burlington" at ordinary shoe-shops; and you can test this for yourself.

Simply send us an order; we will forward shoes by return. *Then, if you are not entirely satisfied with their fit, style, and value, return the shoes and we will refund your money.*

Remember, you are dealing with a firm of national standing. Send that trial order to-day!

How to Order by Post

State shoe number and size, enclose remittance (including enough to cover postage if abroad), also pencil outline of foot, and address to:—

Freeman, Hardy & Willis, Ltd.

(Dept. 98) POSTAL SERVICE,

RUTLAND STREET - - - - LEICESTER

TAILORING for Overseas Men.

The pleasure of being smartly dressed in a well-cut Lounge Suit costs the overseas man only half of what he has to pay in his locality if he uses Groves & Lindley Overseas Tailoring Service.

To-measure Suits of Pure Wool Tweed, 59/-. In the Best Cloths Britain makes, up to £7. Cloth by the yard also supplied.

WRITE for explanatory booklet and over 100 Cloth Patterns. Printed in English, French and Spanish, and illustrated in colours. Latest London styles. Guaranteed satisfaction or cash refund.

GROVES & LINDLEY, Merchant Tailors by Mail, 114 The Lion, Huddersfield, Eng.

10 YEARS' WEAR! Jute Soles last much longer than any others. Suit equally House or Sports; Home or Abroad. Mr. Coorne, Canada, says:—"*Have been wearing pair almost 10 years.*"

Mrs. C———, 7, Hackney Road, Maidstone, says:—
"*So comfortable for standing long hours. Cannot do without them.*"
(State Size and Colour, Black, Brown or White.)

Prices post free in U.K. (Extra Abroad).	Child's.	Ladies'.	Gents'.
A. Plain Shoes (without strapping) ..	3/-	3/7	3/10
D. Leather Fittings (as per illustration).. ..		4/6	4/9
E. Superior, Blocked (no strapping) Boots 1/- ex.	5/9		6/3
F. Ditto, Leather Middle, 1924 Model, the World's **Best Tennis** Shoes (no nails) ..	6/6		7/3
G. Superior "Crepe" Rubber (no jute) Keen Price	8/6		9/9
H. Superior Leather Soles (Child's) 11 to 1 6/-	6/6		8/6

Three pairs at one time, 2d. per pair off; Six pairs, 3d. Full list, 1d. No nails. Coolest for all Sports, Holidays, &c.

PATENT SHOE CO., Central Rd., STEPPS, near GLASGOW.
40 years Advertisers. Letter orders sent return post.

The World's Best Pencils

LUXURY is also Economy when you use A. W. Faber's "Castell" Pencils. Besides giving most pleasure in use

"CASTELL"

Pencils easily outlast those sold at lower prices. From every point of view it is best to use the World's Best Pencils.

In 16 accurately graded degrees. Copying and copying ink.

Sold by Stationers, Artists' Colourmen, etc., the world over.
If any difficulty in obtaining write

A. W. FABER & CO.,
13 & 14, Camomile Street, London, E.C.3.

AERTEX
Underwear

THE CELLULAR CLOTHING CO. LTD. AERTEX LONDON

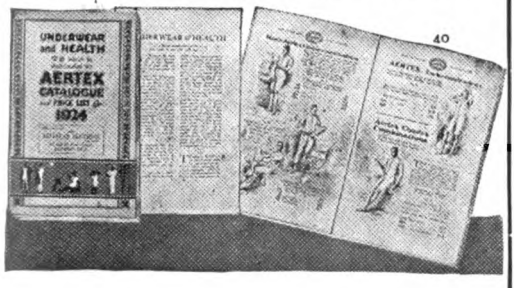
See the AERTEX label on all garments —your guarantee of quality. Refuse imitations.

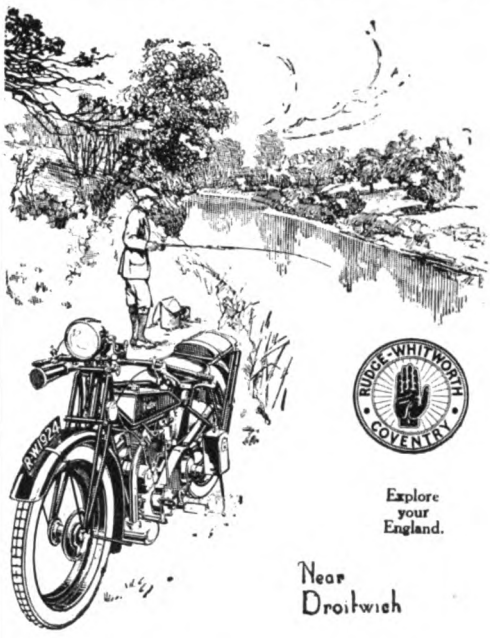
The ideal suit of Summer Underwear costs 10/6 and its name and number are AERTEX 931.

AERTEX garments are not merely cut for ease, cut free from the pulls and tugs which make less skilfully designed underwear so irritating, but the very fabric from which AERTEX garments are made is specially woven to ensure coolness without chill, warmth without discomfort. This fabric contains myriads of tiny cells which form an air-circulating system, refreshing, soothing the tissues, cleansing the pores, yielding a sense of vigour even on the hottest days.

SOLD BY 3,000 HOSIERS, OUTFITTERS AND DRAPERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED KINGDOM.

free: *"Underwear & Health" with full details and prices of AERTEX garments for men, women and children, sent free on request to Cellular Clothing Co. Ltd., 72 & 73 Fore St., London, E.C.2.*





Thinking Time

A great amount has been taken up in evolving the newly-designed Rudge. The result is that only in the Rudge is embodied **all** the following desirable features:—

Four Overhead Valves
(all interchangeable).

Mechanical Lubrication.

Interchangeable Wheels
(quickly detachable).

Four Speed Gear Box
(with helical toothed wheels).

Electric Lighting Set.

Aluminium Piston
(Rudge racing type).

350 c.c. **60 Gns.** (£63) **500 c.c.** **70 Gns.** (£73.10)

1924 Catalogue with beautifully Coloured Front Cover, post free from

Rudge-Whitworth Ltd
Coventry

NO MORE DAMP DECK CHAIRS!

COLLIER'S
Detachable Chair Canvas

Protected by Letters Patent Nos. 187889 *and* 209572.

Can be attached in a couple of seconds to any ordinary Deck Chair Frame.

For Round-Railed Chairs ask for MODEL A.

NO TACKS. NO TROUBLE.

Though preferable, it is not necessary to remove the old fabric. If cut off flush with the edge of the rail it will not impede the working of the device.

ON VIEW AT THE EMPIRE EXHIBITION, Stands No. T811 and 811A C.

Being doubly reversible it lasts and keeps clean twice as long as a fixed canvas; and yet it costs little more than half as much.

Stocked by all the leading Drapery and Furniture Stores and Furnishing Ironmongers.

From 1/6 each—to suit all tastes and pockets.

"As easy to set as a clock, and as plain to read as a yardstick."

Calculation made easy

Those tricky, tiresome figures! . . . to have them done for you! What a boon! What a saving of time and brain work! The Otis King Calculator, a metal-bodied, pocketable little instrument, will do it. Three simple movements . . . 10 seconds of time, and there is the answer to your complicated problem.

Model N will solve any problem of compound multiplication and division; percentages, such as discounts, brokerage, interest, or rate of profit, etc. Send postcard for free, illustrated, descriptive folder "S.M."

PRICE 21/- post free.

Colonial Price: 21/9. Foreign Price: 22/-

Sole Patentees and Manufacturers:

Carbic Limited,

51, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.1.

FORBES'

Patent Aluminium

TENNIS RACKET PRESS.

50% Lighter. 75% Neater.

No screws, springs, or loose parts.

Unaffected by climatic conditions.

Press 5/9. Post 6d. U.K.

Also Patent RACKET CASE AND PRESS Combined.

Get them from your Sports Stores or write

A. FORBES,
Patentee & Manufacturer
73, Fairfax Road, LONDON, N.W.6.

30/- BOOTS FOR 19/9 CATALOGUE POST FREE.

Sold through middlemen and retailer these Gentlemen's Boots would be 30/- per pair. Note.—

DRI-PED SOLES,

Full Chrome, Real Box Calf Uppers, leather-lined, block patent toe-caps, flexible tread, smooth insoles. Double Wear from tab to toe.

Also Derby Shoe same price.

BOYS & YOUTHS
2 to 5 ...17/9
11 to 1 ...16/9
9 and 10...14/9

ORDER THIS WAY.—Send size usually worn and P.O. for 19/9 crossed "& Co." Foreign and Colonial postage extra. Absolute satisfaction or money refunded.

SUTTONS, Union Road, STOCKPORT

Ask for a TERSTON BRITISH MAGAZINE PENCIL

THE name is worth making a note of, because of the superlative value it ensures. The "Terston" is British, and bristles with sound British commonsense efficiency

Made in two sizes, five-inch with clip (Gents'), four-inch with ring (Ladies'). Non-rusting nickel silver, either size **2/6**.

2/6

Sufficient leads for two years' writing supplied with every "Terston."

All Stationers & Stores.

Manufactured by
GEORGE WATERSTON & SONS, LTD
Edinburgh & London.

I have had 20 years' experience.

Have You Any Ambition

to learn a Trade or Profession or go higher in your present vocation? Have you a son? Does he, or do you wish to pass any qualifying Exams.? Remember every man is the Architect of his own fortune, and I can show you how to study in your spare time (by post) and thus reach the highest positions. *As my advice is Free, write to me and let me help you* as I have helped thousands of others.

We specialise in all Exams.

J. H. Bennett

WE TEACH BY POST
Most Moderate Charges. Payable Monthly.

ENGINEERING DICTIONARY
PART ONE FREE
To extend the name of the BENNETT COLLEGE we are publishing an Illustrated Encyclopædic Dictionary of Engineering. Civil, Motor, Elect., Mech. The proper price is 35/— It is in 24 monthly parts of 16 pages each part. You may have Part 1 free, and if you are satisfied send only 6/- and you will receive all the other 23 parts. This offer only applies to the first 1,000 applicants. Send for Part 1 to-day; you are under no obligation.

COMMERCIAL
- Accountancy
- Advertising and Salesmanship
- Auditing
- Banking
- Book-keeping
- Commercial Arithmetic
- Commercial Law
- Company Law
- Costing
- Economics
- English and French
- Executorship Law
- Modern Business Methods
- Secretaryship
- Workshop Organisation

TECHNICAL
- Architectural Drawing
- Building Construction
- Clerk of Works' Duties
- Aviation
- Boiler Engineering
- Boiler Making
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Concrete and Steel
- Draughtsmanship
- Electricity
- Engineering
- Foundry Work
- Internal Combustion Engines
- Marine Engineering
- Mathematics
- Matriculation
- Metallurgy
- Mining
- Mine Surveying
- Motor Engineering
- Naval Architecture
- Pattern Making
- Sanitation
- Shipbuilding
- Structural Engineering
- Surveying and Levelling
- Telegraphy and Telephony
- Wireless Telegraphy

WRITE FOR FREE BOOKLET
to the Bennett College, Dept. 6, Sheffield, naming the subject you are interested in. Please state your age. Parents should seek our advice for their sons. Courses specially combined to meet all requirements. Why stay in the rut?

He's having a saddle to suit—

TO suit his style of riding—with a frame and springs ideally adapted to his purpose.

Moreover, he is making sure that his new saddle will be giving comfort 10 years hence.

He can read it in the beautifully finished, well-proportioned solid leather piece of luxury.

He's making sure this time by having a luxurious

BROOKS
REGISTERED TRADE MARK

——— are you?

We know "An Outline of Comfort" will interes you—if you are a keen rider.

J. B. BROOKS & CO., LTD., 66, Criterion Works, Birmingham.

Sketch ME

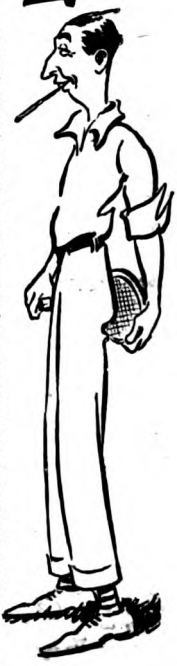
You wish you could sketch but you have, perhaps, persuaded yourself that Drawing ability is beyond your powers? Many men and women who once felt similarly about Drawing have since learnt to make quick characterful sketches of the things that interest them—by the happy study of Press Art School "Nature" Training, in their *leisure hours*. You, too, can develop your natural liking for Drawing into *actual ability* by these methods, provided you *really* wish to draw. Why not start now to learn by Post? My

FREE ILL'D PROSPECTUS

will show you how delightfully simple and interesting Drawing can be when taught naturally and sympathetically. There is no more fascinating pastime than Sketching, and it offers the proficient Student wide scope for a lucrative Career. (This "Tennis Champion" was drawn by one of my former Pupils and many other Students contribute regularly to the leading Illustrated Journals.)

If you have ever thought you would like to Draw for fun, or if you wish to improve your present Drawing ability to the state of *Professional* proficiency, send a p.c. for my free Prospectus—a Drawing Lesson in itself. Address me personally—**Percy V. Bradshaw, Principal,**

THE PRESS ART SCHOOL (Dept. S.M.107), Tudor Hall, Forest Hill, S.E.23.



Foots' Bath Cabinet

THE health value of Thermal (Hot Air or Vapour) Bathing is an established fact. Nothing else is so effective in preventing sickness, or for the cure of Colds, Influenza, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Blood, Skin, Liver, and Kidney Complaints. It eliminates the poisonous matters from the system, increases the flow of blood—the life current—freed from its impurities, clears the skin, recuperates and revitalises the body, quiets the nerves, rests the tired, creates that delightful feeling of invigorated health and strength, insures perfect cleanliness, and is helpful in every way.

Every form of Hot Air, Vapour, or Medicated Baths can be enjoyed privately at home with our Patent Safety Cabinet. When not in use it folds into a small, compact space.

Complete, with **SAFETY OUTSIDE HEATER,** &c.

Write for Bath Book, B 3, Post Free.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd. (Dept. B 3), 171, New Bond St., London, W.1.

Why Polish Each Day?

Just One Application of the

E.J.R.

Invisible Lacquer

and your Brass, Silver and Copperware **will remain bright indefinitely.** Saves daily drudgery on Taps, Geysers, Door-fittings. Stair-rods, Name-plates, Motors, Cycles, etc. Stops Silver wearing off plated articles. Prevents rust and is unaffected by mud or grease. Price, including brush, only 1/6 per tin (postage 3d.), or 2 tins 2/9 (post 4d.). Send P.O. or stamps to

ONLY 1/6 BRUSH FREE

THE E.J.R. CO. (Dept. 20), 682, Holloway Road, LONDON, N.19.

(Trade Enquiries Invited.)

Buy Direct from the Potteries

FINEST SEMI-CHINA TEA SET

YUAN PATTERN

6 Persons, 21 Pieces.

12/6 Post Free

ART CATALOGUE SENT FREE, showing a variety of patterns that can always be matched.

HOME SUPPLY POTTERY CO.

(Proprietors: A. Young & Co.), Dept. S.M.,

Central Works, Mill Street, Hanley, Staffs.

SEE OUR STAND AT WEMBLEY (Section E, Gallery B).

THE BEST BICYCLE YOU CAN BUY

The specification below proves that high prices for high-grade bicycles need not be paid. Be guided by facts—not mere words.

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Refunded.

Roadster Model No 6.

CASH PRICE £5:5:0

Or Hire Purchase. Deposit **10/6,** and 11 Monthly Payments of **10/6.**

SPECIFICATION:

FRAME:—Finest selected weldless steel tubing, Machined lugs. COVENTRY 3 SPIRES CHAIN, DUNLOP CAMBRIDGE TYRES, DUNLOP WESTWOOD RIMS, BRAMPTON HUBS, B.S.A. FREE WHEEL, BOWDEN HANDLE BARS AND BRAKES, LYCETT'S IMPERIAL SADDLE.

Other Models from **65/-**

Enamelled Bright Black, Lined 2 Colours Bright Parts Heavily Plated on Copper.

Hearn CYCLE CO LTD

SEND FOR 1924 LIST NOW!

(Dept. H), 254, Gray's Inn Road, LONDON, W.C.1.

EDUCATE YOUR GIRLS

—Just as carefully as you would your boys . . . first a good school and then a training which **leads to something.** The classified list on page 49 contains particulars of schools and colleges to which you can entrust the education and training of your daughters with every confidence.

Bradford's PATENT VICTRESS-VOWEL WASHING RINGING & MANGLING MACHINE COMBINED

with wood rollers, 21 in. by 4½in. A handy family size, equal to washing one blanket or eight shirts at one time. Occupies very little space. No internal mechanism to get out of order. **Special price for limited period.** Delivered to nearest railway station.

A USER says:

"At the beginning of October I bought a 'Victress-Vowel' Washer from you, and feel I must let you know how very pleased I am with it. I consider it perfectly wonderful, my only regret being that I did not know about it and have one sooner."

Full particulars of other types and sizes of Washing, Wringing and Mangling Machines are given in Catalogue No. 132, B.V.V. **FREE COPY ON REQUEST.**

THOMAS BRADFORD & CO., Makers,

141, High Holborn, London, W.C.1;

130, Bold St., Liverpool; 1, Deansgate, Manchester.

at a Russian Wedding

From the earliest days of civilisation people have prized salt. In Russia, before a newly-married couple enter their new home, it is the custom for someone to cross the threshold carrying bread and salt, a rather quaint and pretty way of suggesting prosperity and good luck.

FALK'S SALT

has been widely used for 37 years. Falk's is a free-running, crisp, clean white salt made in air-tight sealed chambers, and packed in strong, dust-proof cartons, with inner packet. No hand ever touches Falk's Salt.

TRY FALK'S SALT CUBES.

Falk's Salt Cubes are something entirely new. Each cube equals one teaspoonful, and enables you to use just the correct amount of salt. There is no waste, and the cubes dissolve immediately. Try Falk's Salt Cubes—you will be delighted.

You CAN make more money

Don't allow hesitation or doubt to keep you back from the bigger pay and the better things that will be yours when you have qualified for them. You CAN—you WILL—earn more money when you know more about your calling.

All the world now agrees that a specialized vocational training is necessary to success. The question for the ambitious man who is desirous of something much better in life than he now enjoys is, How can I obtain the training that will raise me above the crowd? Here's the answer: From the International Correspondence Schools.

This institution originated spare-time training by post. It is by far the largest organization of its kind in the world. It has teaching centres in eleven countries and students in fifty. 1,000 British I.C.S. Instruction Papers—**specially prepared for correspondence tuition**—are marvels of clearness, accuracy, and practical helpfulness. The I.C.S. staffs of whole-time instructors are unequalled in number and knowledge.

Make up your mind now that you will find out at once what I.C.S. salary-raising training can do for you. As a first step—

USE THIS COUPON

International Correspondence Schools, Limited.
16, International Buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Please send me your booklet containing full particulars of the Course of Correspondence Training before which I have marked X. I assume no obligation.

☐ **Accountancy**	☐ **French and Spanish**
☐ **Advertising**	☐ **Plumbing**
☐ **Architecture**	☐ **Professional Exams.**
☐ **Book-keeping**	☐ **Salesmanship**
☐ **Building**	☐ **Shorthand Typewriting**
☐ **Commercial Art**	☐ **Showcard Writing**
☐ **Draughtsmanship**	☐ **Textiles**
☐ **Engineering, all**	☐ **Woodworking**

branches, state which .....

The I.C.S. teach wherever the post reaches, and have over 300 Courses of Study. If, therefore, your subject is not in the above list write it here.

.....

Name .....

Address .....

OVERSEAS ADDRESSES:

399/401, George Street, Sydney, AUSTRALIA.
65, Cuba Street, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND.
Corner of Rissik and Jeppe Sts., Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA.
Elphinstone Building, Murzban Road, Bombay, INDIA.
137, Cecil Street, Singapore, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.
70, Phayre Street, Rangoon, BURMA.

Something NEW

The reduced cost of high-grade shoes is only one of the advantages of buying direct by post from Barratt's factory. Equally important to a well-dressed lady is the fact that she need not wait till the local middlemen stock a new style, she can get it first, before everybody else is wearing it, by writing to Barratts—the actual makers.

Barratt's Two-Bar Patent Model

Nothing can be smarter for holiday wear. Elegant, slim-fronted best patent leather uppers with neat, blocked toe and stylish walking heel. Daintily punched seam lines, giving smart brogue effect. Two bar straps fastened with buttons. Welt stitched (handsewn principle), solid leather soles and smooth, solid leather insoles. Back quarters lined leather. Perfect fitting. The acme of refinement and marvellous value. Satisfaction or money back.

Styl. 2371B.

Factory Price

21/-

POST FREE.

Postage Overseas Extra.

Same design in Brown Willow Calf, same Price. Style 2429B.

Order By Post—To-day. State Style 2371B and usual size you wear. Sizes stocked: 3, 3½, 4, 4½, 5, 5½, 6, 6½, 7, all comfy width. Send "Footshape" if uncertain of size, easily obtained by sitting down, resting stockinged foot on paper and drawing upright lead pencil round foot. Enclose money order or cheque for 21/- (please register Treasury notes). Overseas Postage Extra. Send only 10/- deposit with C.O.D. orders. Post direct to factory.

Send 3d. postage for Barratt's 162-page Illustrated Catalogue.

W. BARRATT & CO., LD., 20, Footshape, Northampton.

ARE YOU **UNABLE TO WALK?**

Here is good news for you. The Jas. P. Witham *Hand Propelled* machines provide those who cannot walk with a splendid means of locomotion. Fitted with free wheel and 2-speed gear, perfect in construction, they are thoroughly reliable and world-famed for ease of running and hill-climbing.

Fitted with special hill-climbing gear.

HAND-TRICYCLES from £25.

IF YOU CANNOT WALK write for interesting particulars of these splendid machines, also *Indoor* and *Motor* chairs, as perfected and built by one himself unable to walk. Address—**Jas. P. Witham Co.,** *Invalid Chair Specialists,* **24, Pyle House, Newport, Isle of Wight.**

Active Women Who Dread the Hot Weather—

—Because of the discomfort of perspiration, should take special care to arm themselves in good time with a box of Poudre de Santé, now being sold under the registered trade name of "***Marsanta.***"

This delightful and hygienic Toilet Powder keeps the body cool, sweet and comfortable in the hottest weather and the most trying circumstances. It prevents and cures excessive perspiration, and acts as an instant permanent deodorant.

"MARSANTA" is a summer-time necessity to all fastidious women.

In boxes, 2/9, 3/9 & 4/9, post free.

MARSHALL & CO.,

70a, BASINGHALL STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Churchyard Memorials

in the Silvery

GREY CORNISH GRANITE

Tributes of unusual beauty. Everlasting in wear.

ST. MINVER Maltese Cross.

Height 4 ft. **£17** Carriage Paid

and Erected in any Cemetery in England or Wales. Packed for shipment Overseas.

Illustrated Booklet (S.M.) and Specimen Post Free.

G. MAILE & SON, LTD.

(Founded 1785)

The Cornish Granite Sculptors,

365-367, Euston Rd., London, N.W.1

Sent on 7 days' approval.

Dry Clean your Suits at home

12/6 POST FREE With "Book of Hints on Dry Cleaning."

THE 'Mutax' Dry Cleaning Brush is simplicity itself. Simply fill it with petrol and use as an ordinary clothes brush. Dirt and grease can be quickly removed from Suits, Costumes, Hats, Gloves, Upholstery, Carpets, etc. Petrol flows down bristles at will. It is perfectly safe to use. If your ironmonger doesn't stock the 'Mutax,' send direct to us.

Descriptive leaflet free on request.

The 'MUTAX' COMPANY, Town Hall Chambers, Pendleton, MANCHESTER

Sustains Energy and Strength

When feeling a little languid or exhausted, through pressure of work or social engagements, a cup of the 'Allenburys' DIET will quickly dispel the fatigue, soothe the tired nerves and restore strength and energy.

The 'Allenburys' DIET

is so easy of digestion that it may be taken at any time—with meals, between meals or on retiring. It is a light, yet rich and complete food, suitable for everyone from childhood to old age.

Easy to Make. Pleasant to Take.

Your Chemist sells it. In tins at 2/1 & 4/-

Write for a trial sample, sent post free on application to

Allen & Hanburys Ltd.

37 Lombard Street, London, E.C.3.

HOW TO LEARN FRENCH, SPANISH, OR GERMAN

An Ideal Holiday Course

Readers, whether taking their holidays in French, German, or Spanish speaking countries or not, will find the New Pelman Courses in these languages an ideal study for the holidays.

The books and work-sheets constituting the Pelman Language Courses are printed in handy pocket-form. On enrolling, you receive the first five lessons bound up in a neat little book which you can slip in your pocket and study at any moment; in the train, on the beach, lying in the fields, after dinner or supper, in the evenings, anywhere, at any time. The books are as handy to study as the method itself is simple and delightful.

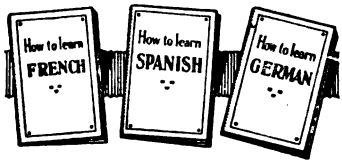
The Pelman method is based on the principle that no Foreign Language should be taught through the medium of another language. The Pelman authorities believe that French should be taught in French, German in German, and Spanish in Spanish, and not through the medium of English. Thus when you are taking one of these Language Courses, you, for the time being, banish your own language from your mind. There is no word of English in the Courses from first to last (except in the guide to Pronunciation, which is a separate book and is sent with the first lesson). Yet, remarkable as it may seem, anyone—even without the slightest previous knowledge of French, Spanish, or German—can study these Courses with the greatest ease.

"I have learnt more French this last FOUR MONTHS than I did before in FOUR YEARS." Writes W. 149.

"I can read and speak with ease, though it is LESS THAN SIX MONTHS since I began to study Spanish." Writes S.M. 181.

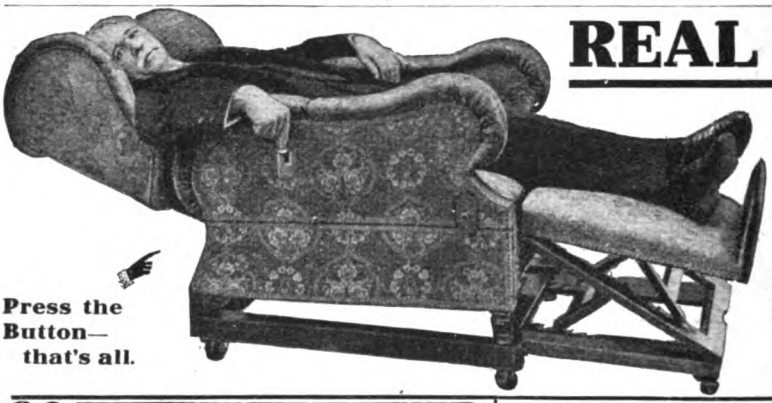
"I have learnt more French during the last THREE MONTHS than I learnt during some Four or Five Years' teaching on old-fashioned lines at a school." Writes S. 382.

The New Pelman method of learning languages is explained in three little books, entitled respectively, *How to Learn French*, *How to Learn Spanish*, and *How to Learn German*.



Any one of these books (with full particulars of the method) will be sent you, gratis and post free, on writing for it to-day to the Pelman Languages Institute, 32, Bloomsbury Mansions, Hart Street, London, W.C.1.

REAL REST.



Press the Button— that's all.

Simply press the button and the back declines or automatically rises to any position—release the button and the back is securely locked. The Leg Rest adjusts to various inclinations and can also be used as a footstool. When not in use it slides under the seat.

Catalogue C.3 of Adjustable Chairs Post Free.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd.
171, NEW BOND ST., LONDON, W.1.

---

80 WORDS A MINUTE IN ONE MONTH

SHORTHAND

SLOAN-DUPLOYAN "NEW RAPID"

SAVES A YEAR'S STUDY.
Handbook and Lesson Free.
SHORTHAND ASSN.,
4, Holborn Hall, W.C.1. Tel.: Hob 6111.

IS YOUR BOY NEARLY READY FOR SCHOOL?

Remember that his character will be mainly moulded during his preparatory school years, and his success in after life may depend very largely upon your choice of a school for him now. Before you decide, consult the list of first-class preparatory schools on page 49.

←Do you suffer with BUNIONS?

VERNON'S PATENT APPLIANCE

WILL RESTORE THE NATURAL FORM OF YOUR JOINTS WITHOUT UNNECESSARY SUFFERING OR OPERATION. →

This modern appliance is designed to give greatest comfort, and the Patent Swivel Action allows the natural movements of the foot to take place while the cure is in process. With perseverance we GUARANTEE A CURE! The inventor was cured in six months. Send P.O. for appliance, stating right or left foot, and size of shoe. Prices:—**4/6**, or in better finish, **7/6**.

THE VERNON APPLIANCE CO. (Dept. S2), 53, Hazelwood Road, NORTHAMPTON.

THINGS OF THE **PAST!!**

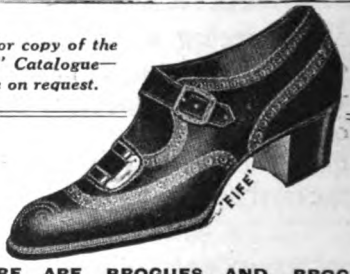
UNSIGHTLY HIGH BOOTS ABOLISHED.

APPLIANCES SUPPLIED TO H.M. GOVT., PRINCIPAL HOSPITALS, &c. GOLD MEDAL AND AWARDS: LONDON, PARIS, CHICAGO, &c.

Pamphlet **FREE** to all mentioning THE STRAND MAGAZINE. Send particulars of your case. Ask for Booklet N.

THE O'CONNOR EXTENSION CO., LTD., SURGICAL BOOT SPECIALISTS,
2, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Send for copy of the "Fife" Catalogue— free on request.



THERE ARE BROGUES AND BROGUES —but none equal the Scotch Made

POPULAR "FIFE" BROGUE

owing to its smart style, honest quality, and long service.

SPLENDIDLY made from best materials with one strap buckling over instep. Steel slides on front. Walking Sole, and Cuban Heel, Willow or Box Calf Leathers.

Order No. 598. Black, per pair **29/6**
Order No. 599. Tan, per pair **31/-**
Also in Nigger or Grey Suede cut from Weilds Calf Skins, recommended with every confidence ... **33/-**

Carriage Paid in U.K. Foreign postage extra. Can be had in all sizes. Send size or outline of foot, and Postal Order.

The "Fife" is worn and appreciated by thousands of ladies the world over. Trial Order proves the "Fife" merit.

A. T. HOGG, No. 64, STRATHMIGLO, FIFE.
The Pioneer and Leader of the "Boots by Post" Trade.

Foster Clark's

The Creamiest Custard for Gooseberries

MULLERISE—*for* Health

Natural vigour and buoyancy, alertness of body and mind are among the most desirable things of life—but to obtain them you *must* be fit. They are worth striving for . . . they *can* be attained. The MULLER SYSTEM, evolved by Mr. J. P. Muller, author of "My System," has given to thousands of people the great gift of health. It can give it to *you*.

Muller's system of exercise and self-massage can be carried out in your home without the use of any special appliance or apparatus.

By it the internal organs are made to function as they were intended to, with the result that all functional disorders, such as Constipation, Indigestion, Obesity, Neurasthenia, Insomnia, Rheumatism, susceptibility to Colds, Influenza, etc., etc., are eradicated once and for all.

You commence with a few simple exercises accompanied with regular breathing, devoting only a few minutes every day to what is rather a delightful recreation, attended with no effort or drudgery. Your strength increases; you begin to perform the more advanced movements which prove of extraordinary interest, and for fifteen happy minutes every day you give yourself up to improving the efficiency of your body. After a little while you realise that you are a different person—more energetic—more cheerful—*younger in body*.

That has been the experience of thousands of men and women who carry out the MULLER SYSTEM and attribute their health and strength to it. Why should not you become fit in the same way?

Many eminent physicians have written in unqualified praise of the MULLER SYSTEM and the medical profession as a whole has recognised that it is founded upon sound principles and carried out with unusual care and attention to individual needs. And so they advise their patients to Mullerise!

Delay is fatal where health is at stake—send the coupon—call or write—to-day.

The MULLER INSTITUTE, 45, Dover Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1

(*Opposite Dover St. Tube Stn.*)

The* MULLER Institute *for Personal Instruction

At the Institute instruction is given under personal supervision in the Exercises which, after consultation, Mr. J. P. MULLER has prescribed for your own particular needs.

For ladies and children special Instruction is given under the care of Lady Instructors.

COUPON

Please send me No.....of these booklets:
(1) *For Men*; (2) *For Ladies and Children.*

Name.....

Address.....

S. .....

The* MULLER System *by Postal Instruction

If you cannot visit the MULLER INSTITUTE personally you can still reap all the advantages of the system by means of a special course of postal instruction. The lessons are specially prepared and controlled by Mr. J. P. Muller, and are adapted for your own individual requirements.

By Appointment to H.M. the King.

GREEN'S *World-Renowned* LAWN MOWERS

Since their establishment in 1835, Green's have been the pioneers of all that is best in Lawn Mowers, Rollers, etc.

The "Silens Messor" is very light running, practically noiseless and gives a fine, even surface. Its reversible Cylinder has 8 Cutters, adjustable to any cut. Gear or Chain Drive. Special Machines for Bowling and Putting Greens include extra Cutter and close-cutting Blades.

Obtainable from Ironmongers, Stores, etc.

Write for free illustrated Booklet No. 37, to

Thos. Green & Son, Ltd., Smithfield Ironworks, LEEDS.

And New Surrey Works, Southwark St., London, S.E.1

The University of BUSINESS

Any average man (or woman) can build an imposing edifice of solid success on the firm foundation of a Metropolitan College business training.

Write to-day for a free copy of the College "GUIDE TO CAREERS" (140 pages); an informative and inspiring volume which shows how *you* may acquire the right to add the status-stamping initials of a recognised professional Secretarial, Accountancy, Banking or Insurance society to your name—proofs of trained ability—by means of

SPECIALISED POSTAL TRAINING, TAKEN AT HOME, IN SPARE TIME.

Postal Courses for Matriculation and B.Com., etc., examinations and many practical (non-examination) Courses in Business subjects are also described.

Metropolitan College, Dept. S., ST. ALBANS.

The "ADAPTA" Bed-Table

A MODERN COMFORT.

Can be instantly raised, lowered, or inclined. It extends over bed, couch, or chair without touching it, and is the ideal Table for reading or taking meals in bed with ease and comfort. By pressing a button the top can be adjusted to various inclinations. It cannot overbalance. Comprises Bed Table, Reading Stand, Writing Table, Bed Rest, Card Table, etc. British made.

(Patented)

No. 1.—Enamelled Metal Parts, with Polished Wood Top **£3 3 0**

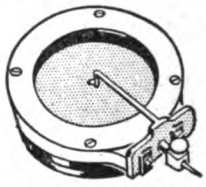
No. 3.—Ditto, with Adjustable Side Tray, Automatic Book Holders, and Polished Oak Top *(as illustrated)* **£5 0 0**

No. 5.—Complete as No. 3, but with Detachable Candle Sconce, and all Metal Parts finished Polished Brass ... **£7 7 0**

Carriage Paid in Great Britain. **Write for Booklet A3.**

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd.,
171, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

NEW GRAMOPHONES FOR OLD—FOR 30/-



Makes any old machine equal in tone to £80 model —makes old records like new.

TREMUSA SOUND BOX

THREE DAYS' FREE TRIAL.

Write for Free Booklet.

REPEATING GRAMOPHONES, LTD.,
102, New Bond Street, London, W.1.

STAND No. V914 B,
British Empire Exhibition.

The "KOPPIO" SELF INKING DUPLICATOR

·EFFICIENT·RAPID·EASY·CLEAN·(Patent)

S. KOPPIO, Duncan Rd., LEICESTER.

"Yeast is life!"

Irving's YEAST-VITE Tablets

THE LIGHTNING PICK-ME-UP. CONTAIN NO HARMFUL DRUGS

Composed of pure medicinal Yeast, Vitamines, and other valuable ingredients as prescribed by leading medical Specialists.

WHEN OUT OF SORTS OR DEPRESSED TAKE 1 OR 2 *YEAST-VITE* TABLETS AND FEEL FRESH AND FRISKY IN A FEW MINUTES.

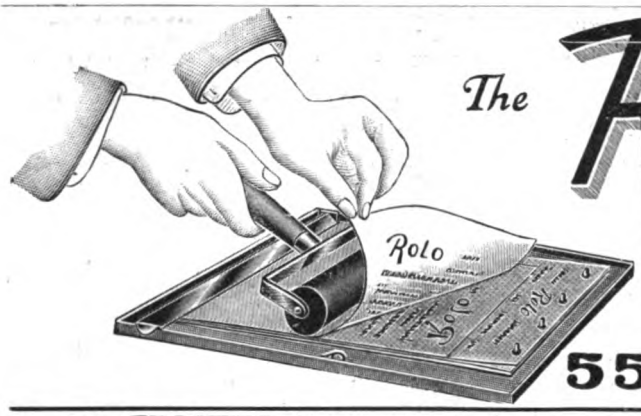
IRVING'S *YEAST-VITE* TABLETS WILL RELIEVE Headache, Neuralgia, etc., in 5 minutes; Biliousness, Dizziness, Depression in 10 to 15 minutes; Indigestion, Flatulence, etc., in 5 to 10 minutes; Disordered Stomach, Liver, 10 to 15 minutes.

Send Postcard for free treatise on Diabetes, Anæmia, Nerves, Skin Blemishes, Constipation, Colds, Insomnia, Rheumatism, Pains, etc.

OUR GUARANTEE. Obtain a **1/3** box from your Chemist. If your health does not improve perceptibly, post us the empty box and we will refund your money immediately. **1/3, 2/9,** and **5/-** per box at all Chemists; or by post.

YEAST-VITE Laboratories,
29, Red Lion St., CLERKENWELL, E.C.1.

IRVING'S YEAST-VITE TABLETS



The ROLO
SELF-INKING
DUPLICATOR

Possesses many attractive features which go to make the perfect duplicating machine.
It reproduces without any skill on the part of the operator perfect hand or type-written copies as quickly as 25 per minute.
Fully charged with ink ready for instant use. No inking or preparation.
Invaluable for reproducing Circular letters, price lists, account collecting letters, notices, drawings, plans, menus, etc. Further particulars from **ROLO LTD., Dept. S.M., 40, HOLBORN VIADUCT, LONDON, E.C.1.**

55/-

Mothersill's
SEASICK REMEDY

Prevents and stops Air, Train and Seasickness or money refunded.

Price 4/2 and 8/4 of all Chemists, or
MOTHERSILL REMEDY CO., 92, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

FREE
to New Writers!

Hundreds of publications require articles and stories from outside contributors. Qualify under expert guidance to earn money by your pen in spare time. Intensely practical lessons; illuminating criticism; helpful advice.
Write NOW for a free copy of "How to Succeed as a Writer," which describes the openings for new contributors and the unique advantages of a postal course which is training men and women to write the kind of copy that editors want, and to **earn while they learn.**
—*Editorial Secretary*, **THE REGENT INSTITUTE (Dept. 129H), 13, Victoria-st., S.W.1.**

Earn While You Learn.

"No better shoes than Norwell's"

The regular buyers of Norwell's footwear—and there are thousands—never buy their shoes from any other firm. Why? Because they get all they want in the way of smart, strong and well-finished footwear from Norwell's at lower prices than those demanded for similar shoes by the retailers. And in addition they get an indefinable distinction which is the stamp of the Norwell shoes.

Norwell's
'Perth' Footwear
"Direct from Scotland."

When ordering state size usually worn, and send pencilled outline of stockinged foot. Perfect fit assured.

22/6
POST FREE

The Gent.'s "GLENMORE."
Price 22/6. A fine Golf or Sports Shoe in Nut Brown Willow Calf with extended heel. Its easy cut, perfection of finish, and hard wearing qualities make this shoe excellent for the links, and a pleasure to wear. Made from finest quality materials, leather lined, and fitted with pure "Crepe" rubber soles and heels.

The Lady's "BALCAIRN." *One of the most arresting designs for 1924, cut from specially selected suede. A dainty, special occasion shoe, with semi Louis heel covered with self material. In Beige with Nigger Glace Binding, also in pleasing shade of grey with Glace Kid Binding to match. Beautifully finished throughout.*

22/6
POST FREE

A single shoe is gladly sent on approval anywhere in Great Britain on receipt of 9d. postage. For obvious reasons we cannot extend this offer to our friends Overseas.

Orders from abroad receive special attention. Postage abroad extra.

GUARANTEE: Money refunded in full should there be the least dissatisfaction.

Write for free Illustrated Catalogue, mentioning "Strand Magazine," to

NORWELL'S "PERTH" FOOTWEAR, LTD., PERTH SCOTLAND

℗ S.M.11

FABRIC STENCILLING.
A fascinating pastime suitable for children or grown-ups. Beautiful results quickly obtained with the use of "The Home Art Stenciller." Price 3/-, 6/-, and 8/- post free from the makers, or obtainable at most Fancy, Toy or Art Supply Houses.
OWEN CAMBRIDGE & CO. BATHAMPTON.

BEDSTEADS! BEDDING!

WHY PAY SHOP PRICES?

Newest patterns in Metal and Wood, Bedding, Wire Mattresses, Cots, etc., Furniture,—Bedroom and general. All goods sent direct from Factory to Home (Carriage Paid) in **PERFECTLY NEW CONDITION.** Send p.c. to-day for Illustrated Price Lists post free. I allow **DISCOUNT FOR CASH** or supply goods payable in Monthly Instalments.
Established 35 years. Special attention given to Export Orders.
CHARLES RILEY
(Desk 12), MOOR STREET, BIRMINGHAM
Please mention "Strand" when writing for lists.

SHORTHAND

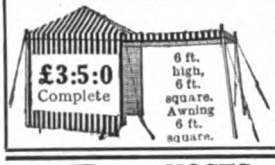
Send for free copy of sixpenny book. The **SLOAN-DUPLOYAN** System saves a year's study, and ranks first for high speed. Used on Parliamentary Reporting Staff. Postage 2d.
SLOAN-DUPLOYAN HEADQUARTERS, (Dept. A), RAMSGATE.

Play Billiards in your Home on a RILEY BILLIARD TABLE

Send for FREE Price List.

A P.O. for 14/- will bring a "Home" Billiard Table to your door. The balance you pay monthly. Cash prices from £7. "Combine" Billiard and Dining Tables from £22-10s., or in monthly payments. Carriage paid. Free packing case. 7 days' approval. Also full-size tables on easy monthly payments extending 3 years. Repairs and Accessories. *Write for particulars.*
E. J. RILEY LTD., Crane Works, ACCRINGTON.

AN EXAMPLE OF VALUE IN GARDEN TENTS.
Made of Super-striped Canvas complete as illustration,



£3 5s. 0d.
Write, enclosing 3d. stamps for List A of Lightweight Tents.
BELL TENTS for SALE or HIRE
London Agent & Showroom: W. WOODERSON, The Plain, Wandsworth, S.W.18. 'Phone Putney 3298.
HERBERT POCOCK, Park Mills, SALISBURY. Est. 1778.

NOSES.—The best patent Nose Machines in the world. Improve ugly noses of all kinds. Scientific yet simple. Can be worn during sleep.
Send stamped envelope for full particulars.
RED NOSES.—My long-established medically approved Treatment absolutely cures red noses. 4/- post free. Foreign, 1/6 extra.
UGLY EARS.—My Improved Rubber Ear Caps remedy ugly outstanding ears. Hundreds of successful cases. 7/6 post free. Foreign, 1/6 extra.
C. LEES RAY, Specialist, Criterion Building, Piccadilly Circus, London, W.1.

CURED MYSELF AFTER 20 YEARS.

STAMMERING.

After Stammering terribly for **20 years** and **trying 'teachers,' schools,** and advertised methods **without relief,** I at last **discovered the real cure** for Stuttering and Stammering (which is **very simple**), and **cured myself.** Now **no stranger could tell** that I had ever been a stammerer. **I will cure you** (or your child) in the **same way** and **guarantee a thorough** and **perfect cure, or no charge. Write to-day** for full particulars **FREE** if you mention *Strand Magazine.*—**MR. FRANK S. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.**

TO COLOUR GREY HAIR

SHADEINE guaranteed permanent, washable, harmless, free from grease. Contains no lead, silver, mercury, sulphur. Will not burn the hair or produce unnatural tints. Trial bottle, **8d.,** per post **10d.**; **1/4,** per post **1/7**; **2/6,** per post **2/10**; **3/9,** per post **4/3.** State colour.
SHADEINE CO., Dept. S.T., 58, Westbourne Grove, London, W.

140 different STAMPS (Cat. 25/-) for 1/-

Our Bargain Packet, No. O90, contains 140 different stamps, including 2 BATOUM (British Occupation), 9 EPIRUS, FRENCH 5 fr. (Cat. 2/-), 9 unused POLAND, 25 to 2,000 mks., obsolete Danzig, 100,000,000 mks., and set of 18 GERMAN PROVISIONALS, unused. Only One packet sent to each applicant. Postage 1½d. extra.
GREAT FREE GIFT OFFER: Every 20th applicant for the above packet will receive gratis either one of the following FREE GIFTS:—Set 9 BATOUM (British Occupation) 1920, 1 to 50 Roubles (Cat. 15/4), or rare 5/- NORTH-WEST PACIFIC Is. (Cat. 12/6).
JUST OUT—Priced Catalogue of Ex-Enemy stamps, 64pp., 300 illus., 1/3.
BRIGHT & SON, 164, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

£5:5s TO £8:19s

Buy direct *from factory* and Save Pounds. We pack Free, pay Carriage, and send Ladies' or Gentlemen's cycles on 15 days' Free Trial. 18 new models to select from. Thousands of testimonials. Money back if dissatisfied. Write for the biggest and most beautiful cycle catalogue ever issued.
MEAD Cycle Company, Inc. (Dept. B743), Birmingham.

BE A STAMP COLLECTOR

and develop a new interest. Alluring hobby—the most profitable in which you can engage. Make your spare time return a dividend. For particulars of only training necessary write Dept. S.M.,
ATKINSON & CO.,
1, LOWER BROOK ST., ULVERSTON, LANCS.

Lt.-Col. RICHARDSON'S

AIREDALES

Specially trained against **BURGLARS,** for ladies' guards; not quarrelsome. Safe children.
From 10 Gns. Pups 5 Gns.
Just Published: **"Watch Dogs, Their Training and Management." 7/6.** *Post* **9d.** *Hutchinson and all Booksellers.*
BROXBOURNE, HERTS.
30 mins. from Liverpool St. Tel.: 52 Broxbourne

ESTD. **ASHFORD'S** 1730
CHIMNEY AND DRAIN SWEEPERS.

We make **SETS** from **35/-** up to **£10 10 0** according to requirements.
20 page List sent **FREE** *on request.*

W. & G. ASHFORD.
11, Lower Essex Street, BIRMINGHAM.

The Brand **"KOPPIO"** is proof of **QUALITY & DURABILITY**

THE "KOPPIO" Brand of pencil carbon and type carbon is very attractive; greaseless, clean to handle and use, it satisfies the most fastidious.
SAMPLES FREE from S. KOPPIO, Duncan Rd., Leicester.

DO YOU FLUSH OR GO PALE?

ARE YOU NERVOUS?

Why be Shy, Awkward in Company? **You needn't** continue to **be a misery** to yourself and to others. You can now **be permanently cured** in **SEVEN DAYS** of **Nervous Timidity, Blushing, Bashful Shyness, Self-Consciousness, Lack of Confidence,** etc. Simple, private, **no auto-suggestion, drill. Write at once** for full particulars, **which** will be sent **free,** privately, if you mention *Strand Magazine.*—Address: **S.M.D., 12, All Saints Road, St. Anne's-on-Sea.**

GROW TALLER

IT PAYS TO BE TALL.
Short people are snubbed and overlooked. By my **simple private method** you can add several inches to your height **without violent exercises, without apparatus.** No risk or strain. Full particulars **free** if you **write at once** and mention *Strand Magazine* (June).
Address: **S. M. EDISON, 51, Church Street, South Shore, Blackpool.**

NO MEDICINE NO DRUGS.

EXTRAORDINARY CURE

For Neurasthenia, Lack of Vitality, Loss of Vigour, and all Nervous Disorders, &c.

Don't DRUG your nerves. Don't be misled into taking what are called—or rather miscalled—nerve foods and nerve tonics. If your nerves are too weak to extract and assimilate the nourishment they need from the food you eat, they can never extract and assimilate it from medicines or drugs.

Weak and irritated nerves need Electricity, not drugging. Professor Loeb, perhaps the greatest of all modern neurologists, has discovered that Electricity is the real Vital Force of the body; that, in fact, health and even life itself depend upon it. The Nervous System is the Power House of the body. It supplies the force that operates all the wonderful bodily machinery that functions every organ, and maintains the whole organism as a living, breathing thing.

SENTINELS OF THE BODY.

When the tide of nervous energy is low, as in Neurasthenia, it is a mistake to drug the nerves into quiescence as the deadly "soothing syrup" drugs a fretful baby. The Nerves are the Sentinels of your Body. The cry of a nerve is a warning you should never ignore, nor should the nerves be stupefied into silence. The warning of the nerves means that the nervous system—and through it every organ and system of the body—is threatened and in danger. There may or may not be actual pain. There may be only such discomforting and distressing symptoms as depression, irritability, loss of vitality and vigour, indisposition for work or play, biliousness, constipation, head pains or pressure, loss of appetite without reason, and a general drooping of all the energies of the body.

DEMONSTRATED BY ACTUAL FACT.

Long before Professor Loeb made public his great discovery, remarkable cures in Neurasthenia and its many associates, functional derangements and disorders of stomach, liver, kidney, bowel, blood and heart, were being accomplished by the Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment. What the great neurologist had enunciated in theory was demonstrated in actual fact, viz., the power of electricity to nourish, soothe and strengthen all the tissues of the body and to vitalise and energise all the organs in the active performance of their vital functions. Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment has effected cures and given relief in cases that have absolutely defied every known method of orthodox medical treatment.

ELECTRIC "THRILL" OF HEALTH.

Drugs can have but two effects on your nerves. They either stupefy or stimulate them. Both are bad—dangerously so. Electricity, on the other hand, when scientifically administered, as it can be in your own home, with the Pulvermacher Appliance, pours new Nerve Force into all great nerve centres. There is no shock, but the thrill of the electric current is quickly felt by the wearer in a quicker circulation of the blood, a sense of "betterness," an exhilarating of spirits, and a clearing of the mind, which must be experienced to be realised. It acts like magic on a weak, debilitated, and vigourless body. It braces up the man or woman who is weak, timorous, self-conscious, or lacking in Vital Energy.

WRITE TO-DAY—IT IS FREE.

Every man or woman who is "below par" in any way should write to-day for full particulars of the Pulvermacher Electrological Treatment, and a copy of the free illustrated book, "Guide to Health and Strength," will be sent gratis and post free to any reader of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. This world-famed treatment is equally beneficial to both sexes. Special Booklets for Ladies and Gentlemen; please specify which is required when writing. Also, by mentioning particulars of your troubles, age, sex, &c., the Superintendent can better advise you. Don't give up in despair until you have read of the well-nigh miraculous cures wrought in a host and variety of nervous and functional disorders. All letters should be addressed to the **SUPERINTENDENT, THE ELECTROLOGICAL INSTITUTE** (J. I. Pulvermacher and Co., Ltd.), 56, VULCAN HOUSE, 56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.4.

THE IMMODERATE USE OF ALCOHOL.

It is not necessary to be an absolute confirmed "drunkard" to be in imminent danger of becoming, if not actually a slave to the vice, a victim of the injurious effects of alcoholic excess. The Turvey Treatment, which can be sent to any part of the country or abroad, not only suppresses the craving for stimulants and drugs, but actually creates an antipathy to them, and, whilst perfectly harmless to either sex, acts as a revivifying tonic, building up the wasted tissues and invigorating the whole nervous system—thus obviating that fearful sinking feeling of collapse which inevitably overcomes the patient's resolution to abstain from alcoholic liquors.

The following letter from a patient contains a special appeal to those who while not yet alcoholic addicts, from force of circumstances and surroundings feel that they cannot discontinue the excessive use of alcoholic beverages.

March 28th, 1924.

I tried the Turvey Treatment solely on your advice that it gives a definite distaste for alcohol, for then if I honestly disliked it I knew I could not be forced to take it. Now from the moment I started the course I never have once wished for a drink. I started on a Saturday morning, and on Sunday evening spent a night with friends who always have lots of drinks with me. I never desired one the whole evening. Since then I have been to a big public dinner where champagne and the best wines were following free, and I never wished to touch anything. I have just returned from Paris, where I had unlimited champagne and drinks thrown at me. Again, I never wanted a thing. Apart from this, I feel ten years younger, I sleep a perfectly gloriously easy sleep, I get up like a bird, and am not fagged out at the end of the day. It required moral courage to make the first decision, and I am convinced this is the only real bar to stopping hundreds like myself from cutting the thing out altogether. I worried as to whether I should lose my friends and be less cheery. I have kept them all, and they are absolutely astonished at my general improvement. I am as cheery at a dance, dinner or at any other time as any of them. My business keenness is a hundredfold better, and I am literally a new man. May I suggest that a definite appeal should be made, not merely to real addicts to Alcohol but to those who from force of circumstances feel they are *bound* to drink. It will be a veritable godsend to such people. You can publish anonymously as much or as little of this letter as you please, and, further, I am prepared to give anyone a personal interview to convince them as far as I possibly can of the remarkable results of the Treatment.

The following inquiry form may be filled in and forwarded (or a letter written), on receipt of which full particulars will be forwarded post free under plain cover:—

..... **TEAR OFF AND POST.** .....

Confidential.

To the MEDICAL SUPT., BRITISH T.T. ASSOCIATION,
14, HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON, W.1.
(Entrance Harewood Place.)
Telephone, Mayfair 3406 (2 lines).

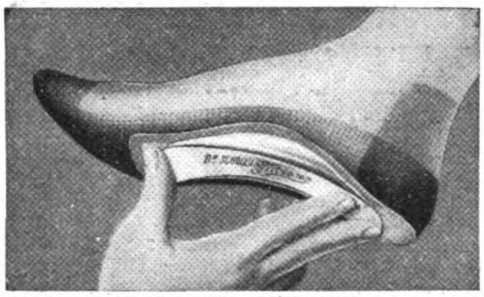
Please forward me by return under plain cover Descriptive Treatise and advice form.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

NOTICE.—Patients or their friends can be seen daily from 10 till 5.30. Saturday 10 till 1. (Appointments may be made by 'phone or post.)



DR. SCHOLL'S FOOT-EAZER

instantly relieves tired, aching, weak or flat-foot. Resilient to the foot, light and comfortable to wear. Preserves the shape of the shoe. All sizes. Price per pair, 10/6

Dr Scholl's
Foot Comfort Appliances

are prescribed by the medical profession throughout the world for all types of foot trouble. They are anatomically correct, adjustable to individual needs, and worn in the usual footwear unobserved.

Dr. Scholl's Foot Book Free on request.

The SCHOLL MFG. CO., LTD., 2, Giltspur Street, London, E.C.1.

DR. SCHOLL'S BUNION REDUCER protects the inflamed area, reduces the enlargement, and stops shoe bulging. Rights and lefts in men's and women's sizes. Each **2/6**

DR. SCHOLL'S TOE-FLEX straightens distorted crooked toes. Restores normal muscular action and corrects bunions. Men's and women's sizes. Each **2/-**

Chivers' Jellies

The World's Standard of Quality, for over a quarter of a century they have been the favourite table sweet.

Flavoured with Ripe Fruit Juices

CHIVERS & SONS, LTD., Orchard Factory, Histon, Cambs.

For Sponging Clothes and Carpets **SUTTON'S** *For Washing Hair-brushes.*

Cloudy Ammonia.

Sole Manufacturers: G. F. Sutton Sons & Co., Osborne Works, King's Cross, London, N.7.

FOOT'S SELF-PROPELLING & SELF-ADJUSTABLE

WHEEL CHAIRS.

Constructed on new and improved principles, which enable the occupant to change the inclination of the back or leg-rest either together or separately to any desired position, meeting every demand for comfort and necessity; also supplied with single or divided and extensible leg-rests. Have specially large rubber-tyred wheels, and are most easily propelled. No other Wheel Chairs are capable of so many adjustments.

Catalogue F3 of WHEEL CHAIRS in various designs post free.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd., Patentees & Manufacturers, 171, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

Don't Wear a Truss.

Brooks' Appliance is a new scientific discovery with automatic air cushions that draws the broken parts together, and binds them as you would a broken limb. It absolutely holds firmly and comfortably and never slips. Always light and cool, and conforms to every moment of the body without chafing or hurting. We make to your measure, and send it to you on a strict guarantee of satisfaction or money refunded, and we have put our price so low that anybody, rich or poor, can buy it. Remember, we make it to your order—send it to you—you wear it—and if it doesn't satisfy you you send it back to us, and we will refund your money. That is the way we do business—always absolutely on the square—and we have sold to thousands of people this way for the past ten years. Remember, we use no salves, no harness, no lies, no fakes. We just give you a straight business deal at a reasonable price.

Write at once for our Illustrated Booklet.

Brooks Appliance Co., Ltd., (1560 L), 80, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

Meltis CHOCOLATE

Dessert and Creamy Milk

4d., 8d. and 1/3 (½-lb. net)

Napolitains 3d., 6d. & 1/-

REMOVES HAIR LIKE MAGIC

No matter how dainty your bathing suit, or how beautiful you are, objectionable hair growths completely rob you of your daintiness. But don't use a razor. It only makes the hair grow faster and thicker just as trimming a hedge stimulates its growth. This is why men once they start using razors soon have to shave daily, and why their beards get so stiff and coarse. Veet is a new perfumed velvety cream that removes hair as if by magic. Whereas razors and ordinary depilatories merely remove hair *above* the skin surface, Veet melts the hair away *beneath* it. It is as easy to use as a face cream and is endorsed by the medical profession. Just spread it on as it comes from the tube, wait a couple of minutes, rinse it off and the hair is gone. Entirely satisfactory results guaranteed in every case or money back. Veet may be obtained from all chemists, hairdressers, and stores for 3/6d. Also sent post paid in plain wrapper for 4/- (trial size by post for 6d. in stamps) Dae Health Laboratories (Dept. 498), 68, Bolsover Street, London, W.1.

VEET

A Perfumed Velvety Cream that Removes Hair.

HEALTHY WOMEN

must wear "healthy" Corsets, and the "Natural Ease" Corset is the most healthy of all. Every wearer says so. While moulding the figure to the most delicate lines of feminine grace they vastly improve the health.

The CORSET of HEALTH

The Natural Ease Corset, Style 2.

8/11 pair. Post Free *Postage abroad extra.*

BACK TO PRE-WAR PRICES.

Complete with Special Detachable Suspenders. Stocked in all sizes from 20 to 30. Made in finest quality Drill.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST.—No bones or steels to drag, hurt, or break. No lacing at the back. Made of strong, durable drill of finest quality, with special suspenders, detachable for washing purposes. It is laced at the sides with elastic lacings to expand freely when breathing. It is fitted with adjustable shoulder straps. It has a short (9 in.) busk in front which ensures a perfect shape, and is fastened at the top and bottom with non-rusting Hooks and Eyes. It can be easily washed at home, having nothing to rust or tarnish.

These Health Corsets are specially recommended for ladies who enjoy cycling, tennis, dancing, golf, etc., as there is nothing to hurt or break. Singers, Actresses and Invalids will find wonderful assistance, as they enable them to breathe with perfect freedom. They yield freely to every movement of the body, and whilst giving beauty of figure are the most comfortable Corsets ever worn. EVERY STITCH BRITISH. Support British women workers and reduce unemployment.

SEND FOR YOURS TO-DAY.

HEALTH CORSET COMPANY (Dept. 65). Morley House, 26/28, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

"Weak Nerves" Made Strong

Fresh Vigour, Determination, Energy and Good Health by the Wonderful Health-Energising

MULLER NUTRIENT

Seven Days' Free Supply

"Nerve Power, the Power Within."

The Muller Nutrient reconstitutes Weak or Disordered Nerves by scientific feeding. Unless these nerve-cells feed they cannot work. All the nervous ailments men and women suffer from to-day are due to insufficiently nourished nerve-cells.

The Muller Nutrient supplies the Organic Phosphoric Substance in a form that allows it to be rapidly assimilated. It is this element, and this element alone, that keeps the Nerve Cells "going." When the cells don't get enough, they become weak and disordered, and the complaint can be briefly described as that of "Starved" Nerve Cells.

AILMENTS DUE TO "NERVE STARVATION."

—Sleeplessness	—Brain Fag	—Excessive Shyness and Timidity
—General Debility	—Irritability	—Hysteria
—Pains in Back	—Loss of Energy	—Anæmia
—Inability to Concentrate Your Mind	—Dizziness	—Incipient Consumption
—Bad Memory	—Depression and Melancholia	—Failing Vision
—Headache and Neuralgia	—Lack of "Fire" and Vigour	

HOW THE NUTRIENT OPERATES.

You take this Nutrient through your digestive organs. It is assimilated and taken by the latter straight to the weakened nerve-cells. It gives them renewed strength, health, and vitality. This remarkable product nourishes the nerve-cells, reconstructs them, and restores them to their normal activity.

Besides nourishing and rebuilding your nerves, the Muller Nutrient—

1. Enriches your blood.
2. Strengthens and increases the all-important corpuscles of the blood which defend your body against germs; and
3. Revitalises and makes better your whole system.

After taking the Muller preparation for a few days (as you can now for a week practically free of charge) you feel absolutely different, better, brighter, stronger, healthier, and more energetic, and more "vital" in every way.

The Muller Nutrient is NOT A DRUG OR SECRET REMEDY (the formula is at the disposal of any recognised medical practitioner), it is a true Nerve Food, and is indispensable to brain workers and other people whose work is of a trying nature. It is taken in just the same way as ordinary food.

"Medical Times" says:—"*As a typical example of a true recuperative food may be mentioned the Muller Nutrient.*"

WRITE TO-DAY BEFORE YOU FORGET.

By writing to-day you can obtain the whole week's supply by sending four (1d.) stamps, the bare out-of-pocket cost of postage, etc. With this week's trial course will be sent a presentation copy of Dr. Muller's book on the Nervous System and its requirements for health. Published at 1s., this book will also be sent to you FREE. Only one Trial Supply can be sent to the same person.

Send your full name and address, with four stamps, to No. 180, The Muller Laboratories, Scientific Food Specialists, 37, Manchester Street, Manchester Square, London, W.1, and the booklet and seven days' Trial Supply of the Nutrient will be sent free in a plain sealed cover.

Enquirers calling at the offices, 37, Manchester Street, Manchester Square, can receive gratuitous expert advice from the Acting Consultancy from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Saturdays excepted.

The Muller Nutrient can be ordered from Boots' Branches, Harrods, Barkers, and Selfridges, and from all high-class Chemists in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

N.B.—Testimonials of the Muller Nutrient are not published in newspapers, but a printed collection selected from many hundreds will be sent on request.

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

"May I go in ?"

Certainly! Barnardo's never refuse a destitute child, and that is the reason why in the 57 years of their existence they have admitted over 96,000 orphan and destitute little ones. But such a work is constantly in need of funds if its Charter "No destitute child ever refused admission" is to be maintained.

96,542 children admitted.
7,308 now being supported.
1,328 are babies under 5.
5 admitted daily.

ANNUAL HALF-CROWN COLLECTION

The Annual Half-Crown Collection is now being made to help feed the Largest Family in the World.

Will you send them Half-a-Crown for food?

Cheques and Orders payable "Dr. Barnardo's Homes Food Fund," and crossed, may be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, HOWARD WILLIAMS, Esq., (Dept. S), 18-26, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

The worst weather for a solid week stands no chance against a Beacon Oilskin. It is waterproof; proof against Rain, Snow, Sleet, Hail, and Blinding Spindrift. In one you will be dry and cosy *always*.

BEACON OILSKINS

DON'T GO STICKY or LET IN THE WET

Money back in full if they fail to satisfy. This **Bute** Coat will keep you dry and comfortable in a solid week of wet. It is made of light, smooth oilskin, with wide skirt, Raglan shoulders, belt at back, inner storm cuffs, and two big pockets. In black, lightweight, non-sticking Oilskin **25/-**. In colours, **30/-**; Two-colour Oilskin Hat with adjustable brim. Bute quality material, to match, **7/6**. Bute Spat Leggings to reach to the knee; clip down sides, **7/6**; Children's, **6/9**.

ILLUSTRATED LIST POST FREE

describing money-back Guaranteed Oilskins for Outdoor Men, Women, and Children. Send a p.c. for it to-day to—

J. BARBOUR & SONS, LTD., 19, Beacon B'ld'gs, So. Shields, Eng.

NEARLY EVERYONE CAN WRITE

well enough to get into print if he knows what to write about. The Premier School's

SUBJECT CHART (Copyright)

indicating hundreds of acceptable ideas and many valuable hints will be sent post free on application. A pupil writes:

"Since I first commenced my journalistic tuition under you, 18 months ago, I have received from my literary work close on £500."

SAMPLE LESSON and Prospectus with details of Separate Correspondence Courses in Article or Story Writing FREE on application to the SUPERVISOR,

Premier School of Journalism
4 & 5, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2.

The only rubber heel without a fault.

CONCAVE - CONVEX
T.S
Regd Trade Mark
RUBBER HEELS

See a pair of I.T.S. heels attached . . . note their patent CONCAVE-CONVEX moulding. It compels a permanent and invisible join without need for solution . . . test their toughness . . . test the non-slipping, double-suction cups . . . WALK ON I.T.S. . . . then you'll understand the Boot Trade's enthusiasm for the only rubber heel built on scientific lines, combining neatness and elegance with economy and comfort.

Men's **1/6** per pair.

The *All*-Rubber Heel.

Women's & Children's **1/-** per pair.

BLACK AND TAN.

Sent free!

This instructive and amusing booklet about I.T.S. Rubber Heels will be sent free on application to Dept. S, I.T.S. Rubber Co., Ltd., 42, Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1.

SCHOOLS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

SECRETARIAL AND COMMERCIAL TRAINING.

KENSINGTON COLLEGE.

Secretarial and Commercial CAREERS GUARANTEED your Sons and Daughters. PROSPECTUS and "CAREERS THAT PAY" by "TRUTH," post free from the Director, Mr. J. S. Munford, F.R.S.A., F.R.C.I., 34, Bishop's Road, PADDINGTON, London, W.2. Tel. Paddn. 4348. LATEST RECORD—£500 per annum for a girl of nineteen as PRIVATE SECRETARY to a ROYAL PERSONAGE. "Kensington College has solved the most difficult of all problems, that of finding Employment after Education." Sir Albert Rollit, President London Chamber of Commerce. RESIDENTIAL, DAY AND POSTAL. Founded 1887.

SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS.

DOMESTIC SCIENCE BRANCH OF

PENRHOS COLLEGE, COLWYN BAY,

for 10 girls of 16 and over.

One year's course begins in September under a fully qualified mistress. Fees: 44 guineas a term. Apply Principal.

ST. HELEN'S SCHOOL, COCKERMOUTH.

Lake District. Unrivalled situation. Mountain and sea air. Good diet. Efficient staff. Playing fields. Spacious rooms.

ELLERSLIE, MALVERN.

Highly recommended Girls' Boarding School. Home Comforts. Healthily situated. Gymnasium, Tennis Courts, and Sanatorium in extensive grounds. Principal, Miss SAYLE.

INGLEMERE SCHOOL, ARNSIDE,

S. WESTMORLAND. On the sea coast looking on to Lake Mountains. Boarding School only of 100 Girls. Splendid Buildings. Graduate Staff. Extensive Playing Fields. seven Tennis Courts. Principal, Mrs. LLEWELLYN.

LOWTHER COLLEGE, BODELWYDDAN

CASTLE, Near RHYL, N. WALES—Recognised by the Board of Education, 1922. Beautifully situated in a Park of 400 acres. Sea and Mountain air. Senior and Junior Houses. Twenty Resident Mistresses, including Mus. Doc., M.A., B.Sc., B.A., and L.R.A.M. Games and French. Swimming Bath. Electric Light, Central Heating. Modern Sanitation. Special Courses of Study for Senior Pupils, including Riding (own horses kept), Domestic Science, Gardening, &c.

CROWBOROUGH, SUSSEX. HOOKSTEAD

"Home" School. Thorough Education. Art, Music, Languages. Entire charge if desired.—Prins., Misses HOOKER.

REALLY GOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
AT REASONABLE INCLUSIVE FEES.

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE,

TYTHERINGTON HALL, CHESHIRE, nr. MACCLESFIELD. Sound Education. Upper and Lower Schools. Preparation, when desired, for all University Entrance Exams. The Staff includes M.A., B.A., Higher Local (Cam.), Inter.B.A., Mus. Bac., L.R.A.M., L.T.C.M., B.I.E., &c. Games Coached by 'Varsity Man. Splendid Health Record. Prospectus from Secretary.

PENDRE SCHOOL, PRESTATYN, N. WALES

Home School for Girls and Little Boys. The school-house stands on the hillside among beautiful surroundings—sea and hills. Games—Swimming—Guide Troop. Special care for delicate children.—Principal, MISS B. E. FIELD.

UPPER CHINE, SHANKLIN, I. OF WIGHT.

A Girls' School on progressive modern lines. Ideal premises. Preparation for careers and home life. (Domestic Science Dept. for elder girls.) Prospectus on application.

EVERSLEY SCHOOL (for girls), SOUTHPORT, is characterised by consideration of pupils AS INDIVIDUALS. An excellent post-school course may be had in the

COLLEGE OF HOUSECRAFT—SOUTHPORT.

DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOLS.

STRATHEARN COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

Cookery, Domestic Science, and all Finishing Subjects for Girls over 16. Excellent Health Record, Home Comforts, Careful Supervision. All Games. Own Farm and Garden Produce.—Illus. Prosp. from the Principal.

PHYSICAL TRAINING COLLEGE.

DENMARK HILL PHYSICAL TRAINING

COLLEGE, ALLEYN PARK, LONDON, S.E.21.—Preparation for the LING DIPLOMA and the Certificates of THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF MASSAGE, &c.

CONTINENTAL SCHOOLS—GIRLS.

OUCHY, LAUSANNE, ROSENECK.

FINISHING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS. (20 Pupils.)—Prospectus and References from the PRINCIPAL.

SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.

AYLWIN COLLEGE, ARNSIDE,

Nr. CARNFORTH. Boarding School of 80 Boys. Excellent Buildings. Extensive outlook over 30 miles. Good Work. Good Games. Good Food. Good Health. Prospectus and List of Successes on application.

HEVERSHAM SCHOOL, WESTMORLAND.

Founded 1613. Excellent situation. Sea and Mountain air. Education suitable for Professional or Commercial Life. Graduate Staff. Leaving Exhibitions. Good Buildings, Playing Fields, &c.—R. B. THRELFALL, M.A. (Oxon.), Head Master.

HARROGATE—PANNAL ASH COLLEGE.

Boarders only. Sixty acres. Formation of character a chief aim. Separate House in College Grounds for boys 7–12. Illustrated prospectus.—WALTER S. HILL, F.R.G.S., Principal.

C. BRANDAUER & CO.'s
(LIMITED)
Circular-Pointed
PENS

SEVEN PRIZE MEDALS

These Series of Pens Write as Smoothly as a Lead Pencil—Neither Scratch nor Spurt, the points being rounded by a Special Process.

Assorted Sample Boxes 9d., to be obtained from all Stationers.

If out of stock, send 10½d. in Stamps direct to the Works, BIRMINGHAM.

WOLFF'S
Royal Sovereign
Pencils

The Finest Pencil in the World
BRITISH MADE.

Price 4D. each.

This offer applies only to the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State

FREE

These Two Beautiful Caskets full of Fry's Delicious Chocolates

Save your labels from tins of Fry's Cocoa, and write for FREE-START COUPON, to J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., 2-11, Union Street, Bristol.

869

"The Apple as a Drink"

IF everyone who tries cider could only taste 'Golden Pippin" *first*, all the orchards of the West Countrie would be hard pressed to meet the demand. A connoisseur of Wine or Champagne orders a specified brand and sees that he gets it; follow his example and ask your waiter, your Grocer, or your Wine Merchant not merely for cider, but insist on "Golden Pippin" Cider-de-Luxe. It is just the pure juice of vintage apples from selected orchards in the West of England and nothing but that, naturally fermented, made and matured with scientific care and cleanliness, and delivered to you in perfect condition. There is no drink so pure, so wholesome and healthful, so delicious and satisfying. You can taste the apples in it, sense the clean aroma of the orchards, picture the blossom-laden trees, or the sun-dappled grass littered with ripening fruit. Let a trial convince you. *If you have any difficulty in obtaining locally, write direct for a sample case, containing* 3 *doz. champagne pints, for* 34*s., or a* 10*-gallon cask* 40*s., sent carriage paid in England and Wales. Off this price* 15*s. is allowed for empty cask and* 10*s. for bottles and case when returned.*

A "Treatise on Cider," giving full particulars, Post Free—

Golden Pippin
CIDER-de-LUXE

together with the name and address of the nearest agent.

WM. EVANS & CO., LTD., Dept. S, HEREFORD. Also Hele, Devon. Estab. 1850.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for June, 1924.

The rights of translation and reproduction in the contents of this number are strictly reserved.

Frontispiece: "He plucked at his collar, and staggered wildly back against the desk: then he raised imploring hands to Garling."

		PAGE
THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.	"SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)	535
PORTRAITS IN PENCIL AND PEN JOSEPH CONRAD. LORD BEATTY. W. J. LOCKE. Illustrations from Drawings from Life made at sittings specially given to the Artist.	WALTER TITTLE	546
NOUGHTS AND CROSSES Illustrations by John Campbell.	W. L. GEORGE	554
MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES—Part IX. Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.	A. CONAN DOYLE	563
CONFESSORS Illustrations by E. G. Oakdale.	PERCEVAL GIBBON	575
ACROSTICS		584
ELIZABETH'S MUSICIAN Illustrations by Robin.	FLORENCE A. KILPATRICK	585
A GREAT SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE Illustrations from Photographs.	HARRY A. STEWART	588
THE MENDLEAN APOLLO Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.	PHIL FORSYTH	597
TRIALS OF A JOKE-HUNTER Illustrations from Drawings by the Author.	L. RAVEN-HILL	604
"THE FINING POT IS FOR SILVER——" Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.	F. BRITTEN AUSTIN	610
FORTY YEARS OF SONG Illustrations from Photographs and a Drawing.	BEN DAVIES	624
THE NEW MEMBER Illustrations by S. Abbey.	H. A. VACHELL	630
PERPLEXITIES	HENRY E. DUDENEY	638

THE STRAND MAGAZINE is printed by the Newnes and Pearson Printing Co., Ltd., N. Kensington, and published monthly by the Proprietors, George Newnes, Ltd., 8 to 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, England. Subscription price to any part of the world, post free, for one year, 15s. (Canada, 13s. 6d.). Registered at the General Post Office for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office. Cases for binding volumes of THE STRAND MAGAZINE may be obtained to order from Booksellers for 2s. 6d., or post free for 2s. 10d. direct from the Office. Half-yearly Volumes, 7s. 6d. net.

Sole Agents for Australasia: Gordon & Gotch (Asia), Ltd. Sole Agents for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. American Agents: The International News Company, 83 and 85, Duane Street, New York.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.—MSS. and Drawings must be submitted at the owner's risk, and the Editor will not guarantee their safety, though when stamps are enclosed he will endeavour to return them. MSS. should be typewritten. All contributions paid for on acceptance.

The Index to Volume 67 can be obtained on application to the Publisher.

Most of the Original Drawings of the Illustrations in this Magazine are for sale. Terms may be had on application to the Cliche Department, George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

"Luvisca" (REGISTERED)

SHIRTS, PYJAMAS AND SOFT COLLARS.

"LUVISCA" looks like silk, lasts longer than silk, and is cheaper than silk; it soils far less easily than any other material. "LUVISCA" has all the qualities critical men demand.

If any difficulty in obtaining "Luvisca" Shirts, Pyjamas, and Soft Collars, write to COURTAULDS, LTD. (Dept. 16M), 10, Aldermanbury, London, E.C.2, who will send you name of your nearest retailer and descriptive booklet.

LOOK FOR THE "LUVISCA" TAB ON EVERY GARMENT.

NONE GENUINE WITHOUT.

ARE YOU GOING BALD?

Amazing Discovery of Hair-Growing Secret.

PROVED BY OVER 1,000 DOCTORS

32-pp. ILLUSTRATED BOOK FREE

For years Scientists have known that the origin of nearly all hair troubles is malnutrition of the hair roots. Dr. David Walsh, M.D., Edin., points out: ". . . Like all other tissues of the body, hair derives its nourishment from the blood."

If you are afraid of going bald, if your hair causes you the slightest anxiety, if it is dry and brittle, full of scurf or dandruff, if it is fading or falling out, even if you *are* bald, send a card at once for a free copy of an intensely interesting 32-page Illustrated Book about the startling hair-growing discovery that has caused such a sensation in medical circles.

So amazing has been the success of this new hair food, Humagsolan, that a special complimentary edition of its explanatory treatise has been prepared, and you should apply at once by letter or postcard to make sure of obtaining your free copy. It gives in clear, easy to understand language full details of the discovery that has revolutionised hair treatment. And it tells how Humagsolan has conquered hair troubles that have hitherto defied every form of treatment, for Humagsolan at last makes it possible to nourish the hair roots themselves in a scientific way. That is why

OVER A THOUSAND DOCTORS

have endorsed Humagsolan, a wonderful new Hair Food that is made up in tablet form. It builds up from within the roots of the hair and positively makes hair grow. From the moment the treatment is commenced Humagsolan stops the hair from falling out, and it begins to grow stronger and thicker; bald patches disappear and natural vigorous growth is resumed. Humagsolan has been known to effect this wonderful change in the short space of a fortnight. Success can practically be guaranteed with one month's course of treatment. Many wise people who rejoice in good heads of hair take Humagsolan regularly to preserve its health. It will improve even the most beautiful hair.

If you have the slightest anxiety about your hair, if you are faced every morning with Nature's warning, do not delay! Send a letter or card for a special free copy of the intensely interesting 32-page illustrated book which embodies the whole of this interesting subject, together with sketches showing how hair grows, the position of the hair roots and how they function, etc. It also includes chapters on Hygiene of the hair, Your brush and comb, Scurf and dryness, Greasy Hair, Splitting Hair, Baldness, Nervous and Constitutional Troubles, Loss of Colour, Greyness, Alopecia, What the Doctors say, etc.

DO NOT DELAY—WRITE TO-DAY.

Do not hesitate to apply for a copy. It is sent to you **post free and implies no obligation on your part whatever.** If you care to state in confidence any particulars concerning the nature of your hair trouble, a personal letter of advice will be sent free of all obligation on your part.

Applications for this valuable Book should be addressed to: HUMAGSOLAN, LTD., 15M, Faraday House, 10, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2.

Don't let Headache Spoil your Holiday.

THE excitement of catching the train — the tedious journey itself, and the irregular meals, all tend to give you a headache.

Be Prepared! Carry a bottle of Genasprin with you, and at the first sign of Headache take a couple of tablets in a little water. They will quieten the throbbing nerves, and banish the headache in a few moments. Remember, too, that Genasprin is perfectly pure, causes no reaction or ill-effects and may therefore be taken with safety.

That is why the leading medical authorities prescribe *Genasprin* in preference to all ordinary brands of aspirin.

Never be without

GENASPRIN

(The Safe Brand of aspirin)

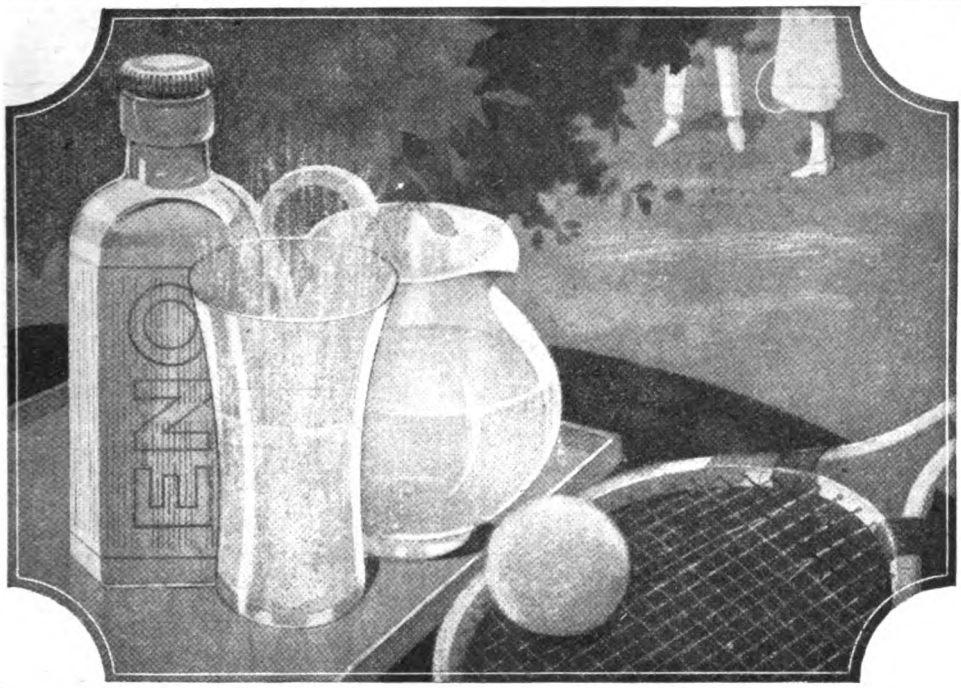
The Glorious health-giving days by the seaside are precious to you, and to each member of your family. Don't let one hour of your holiday be marred by headache, toothache or neuralgia.

Go *now* to your nearest chemist and get a supply of Genasprin — price 2/- per bottle of 35 tablets—and keep them handy for all emergencies.

Sole Manufacturers:

Genatosan, Ltd., Loughborough, Leicestershire.

To face back of Frontispiece.



Noonday Play

THE supreme joy of tennis is a well-balanced set. The closer the contest the better the sport. With the games "eight all" and the summer sunshine blazing down on the courts—then comes the test of endurance.

It is the extra ounce of stamina that counts, the clear eye and steady nerve that prevail at the crisis of the set.

To keep in match-winning form always, drink ENO's "Fruit Salt." A glass of cold water with a dash of ENO is the most refreshing of cool drinks, and its daily use promotes the highest degree of physical fitness.

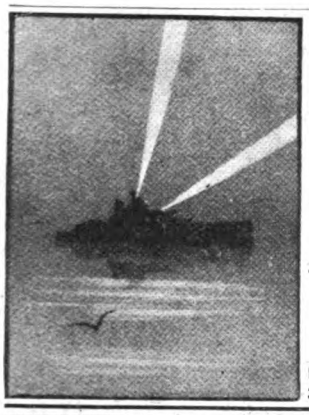
ENO'S "FRUIT SALT"

The World-Famed Effervescent Saline

Sold in two sizes by chemists and drug stores throughout the world.

To face end of Text.

CAN YOU FIND THEM ?



There are some Charming Specimens of

NOVLART

at

WEMBLEY

Stand No. F. 205

Toy Section British Industries.

HARBUTT'S PLASTICINE, Ltd.
3, Bathampton, Bath.

"I found that I wanted some more Mansion Polish so I thought I had better buy a tin."
"Oh, that's right; we must not run out of it."

MANSION POLISH

quickly gives a beautiful mirror-like surface to Furniture, Stained or Parquet Floors & Linoleum.

Sold in Tins, 4d., 7½d., 1/- and 1/9.

For BOX CALF, GLACÉ KID, PATENT & OTHER LEATHERS, USE

CHERRY BLOSSOM BOOT POLISH

THE CHISWICK POLISH CO., Ltd., CHISWICK, LONDON, W., ENG.

MANSFIELD'S

PATENT AUTOMATIC

Water & Oil Finders

are used by leading Governments, Railway Companies, Land Companies, Well-Boring Engineers, and others.

A Colonial Engineer writes:
"Since purchasing the Instrument I have selected 300 sites, most of which I have either bored upon with our own plants, or had bored by sub-contractors. In every instance we have been successful."

Prices of Water Finding Instruments are:

£50 locating at all depths up to 200ft.
£75 " " " " " 500ft.
£125 " " " " " 1,000ft.

Prices of Water and Oil Finding Instruments are:—

£200 locating at all depths up to 3,500ft.
£275 " " " " " 4,500ft.
£375 " " " " " 6,000ft.

Delivery at Colonial or Foreign Seaports £3 extra.

We undertake the location of sites and boring at lump sum prices under guarantee of

"No full supply no pay."

Particulars on application to

W. MANSFIELD & CO., 17, BRUNSWICK ST., LIVERPOOL.

Makers of Well-Boring Plant, Pumps, Windmills, Oil Engines, and everything connected with Water Supply and Irrigation.
Cables: "MANTLES, LIVERPOOL." Telephone No.: 1392 BANK.

TRY IT TO-DAY

and see what a great improvement it makes in your home-baking

BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER

Your cakes, pastry puddings and pies will be so much lighter, more digestible & appetizing.

BOURNVILLE COCOA

MADE BY CADBURY

HOW TO MAKE DELICIOUS DRINKING CHOCOLATE WITH BOURNVILLE COCOA

FOR A LARGE CUP PUT INTO A SAUCEPAN A LEVEL DESSERTSPOONFUL OF COCOA WITH AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF SUGAR (OR MORE TO TASTE) WITH HALF A CUP OF WATER. WHEN BOILING ADD HALF A CUP OF COLD MILK. BOIL AGAIN FOR ONE MINUTE. WHISK AND SERVE HOT.

See the name "CADBURY" on every piece of Chocolate

Beauty Collection

Cuttings from Beauty Articles. The Cream of Modern Beauty Advice.

Removing Bad Complexions.

Cosmetics can never really help a poor complexion; often they are positively harmful. The sensible, rational way is to actually remove the thin veil of stifling, half-dead scarf skin from the face, and give the fresh, vigorous, and beautiful young skin *underneath* a chance to show itself and to breathe.

This is best done in a very simple way, by merely applying mercolized wax at night, like cold cream, and washing it off in the morning. It absorbs the disfiguring cuticle gradually and harmlessly, leaving a brilliant natural complexion. Of course, this also takes with it all such facial blemishes as red blotches, tan, moth patches, sallowness, liver spots, etc.

The new skin is usually several degrees lighter, and finer in texture.

To Kill Hair Roots.

Women annoyed with disfiguring growths of superfluous hair wish to know not merely how to temporarily remove the hair, but how to kill the roots permanently. For this purpose pure-powdered pheminol may be applied directly to the objectionable hair growth. The recommended treatment is designed not only to instantly remove the hair but also to actually kill the roots so that the growth will not return. About an ounce of pheminol should be sufficient.

How to have Thick and Pretty Hair.

Soaps and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed ½-lb. packages. However, this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, and it really works out very cheaply in the end

BARGAINS in Linen Remnants

THE ever increasing demand for Hutton's Remnant Bundles of Pure Irish Linen direct from Ireland—the home of fine linen—is convincing evidence of the unequalled economic value of these Bundles. Every Bundle is a BARGAIN that will surprise you.

Remnant bundles of Coloured Art Linen for cushion covers and fancy needlework. Postage 6d. Per bundle **8/6**

Remnant bundles of best quality Pillow Linen to make six pillow cases, size 20 by 30 inches. Post free. Per bundle **20/-**

Remnant bundles of White Art Linen for afternoon tea cloths, tray cloths, etc. Postage 6d. Per bundle **11/9**

Remnant bundles of Irish Linen Huckaback Towelling sufficient to make six full-sized bedroom towels. Postage 9d. Per bundle **12/6**

Remnant bundles of Linen Roller Towelling, very strong durable make which will stand hard wear. Sufficient to make 4 towels 2½ yards long. Postage 6d. Per bundle **11/-**

Bundles of odd White Mercerised COTTON Damask Tablecloths, good reliable quality, assorted sizes. Five cloths in each bundle for **25/-**

Our Guarantee. Goods not approved can be returned to be exchanged or money refunded.

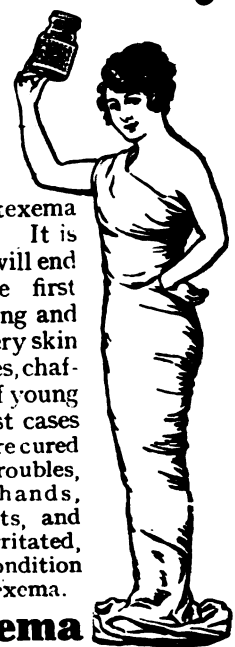
WRITE FOR BARGAIN LIST—FREE.

Hutton's

95, Main Street, LARNE, Ireland.

Start To-day

and get rid of your skin trouble



Whatever your skin trouble, Antexema will cure it. As water puts out fire, so Antexema conquers skin illness. It is the one remedy that will end your trouble. The first touch stops all itching and starts your cure. Every skin complaint, from rashes, chafing, and tenderness of young children, to the worst cases of obstinate eczema, are cured by Antexema. Scalp troubles, bad legs, rough hands, insect bites, face spots, and every other sore, irritated, or blotchy skin condition quickly yields to Antexema.

Get Antexema

to-day from your chemist, stores, Boots', Lewis and Burrows', Taylors' Drug Co., Parke's or Timothy White's at 3/- (the economical size) and 1/3; or direct post free 3/- and 1/6, from Castle Laboratory, London, N.W.1. Also in India, Australasia, Canada, Africa and Europe.

☞ *Use Antexema Soap (pine tar) and keep your skin clear of all blemishes and protect yourself against infection.* 9d. *tablets.*

"So you found it good too, Gran!"

HEALTH for both young and old depends upon *food*. From food alone can be obtained those brain and body-building elements which maintain health and strength.

The aged need those vital food elements, which must be sustaining, highly concentrated, delicious in flavour and easily digested.

Growing children are rapidly building up bone, brain and muscle. They need extra nourishment in order to ensure steady and regular growth.

In both cases "Ovaltine" exactly meets the need. "Ovaltine" is pure concentrated nourishment in an easily digested form. It combines the health-giving nutriment extracted from malt, eggs and milk.

The delicious flavour of this most nourishing food-beverage appeals to young and old alike. "Ovaltine" supplies that assistance to health which everyone needs.

OVALTINE

TONIC FOOD BEVERAGE

Builds-up Brain, Nerve and Body

One cup of "Ovaltine" contains more nourishment than 7 cups of cocoa, 12 cups of beef extract, or 3 eggs.

Sold by all Chemists, at 1/6, 2/6 and 4/6.
It is economical to purchase the larger size tins.

A. WANDER, Ltd. **LONDON, E.C.1**

'OVALTINE' RUSKS

More appetising, easily digested and much more nourishing than ordinary rusks or biscuits.
Price 1/6 & 2/6 per tin.

P226

'OVALTINE' CHOCOLATE

Children—and adults, too—will enjoy this most delicious and very nourishing food-sweet.
Price 8d. & 1/3 per packet.

Peach's Curtains

Send now for this **Book, 550 Illustrations. Modern Lace Curtains,** beautiful and attractive. **DIRECT FROM THE LOOMS. Imperial Hem Curtains, Casement Curtains,** made all sizes. Estimates Free. **Nets, Cretonnes, Blinds, Muslins, Linens, Laces,** etc. **Write to-day.—**
S. PEACH & SONS,
112, The Looms, NOTTINGHAM.

LETTERS COPIED WHILE WRITING.

Full particulars about Zanetic Copying Paper and Books from
S. ZANETIC, Duncan Road, Leicester.

THE DEAF HEAR

The New Patent
SOUND DISCS

Completely overcome DEAFNESS and HEAD NOISES, no matter of how long standing. Are the same to the ears as glasses are to the eyes. Invisible. Comfortable. Worn months without removal. Explanatory Pamphlet Free.

THE H. S. WALES CO., 171, NEW BOND ST., LONDON, W.1.

TENTS
FOR THE TROPICS

Also Sleeping Bags, as supplied to Mount Everest Expedition.

Send 3d. stamps for list.

Lightweight Tent Co. (Dept. S), 70, High Holborn, London, W.C.1

Your services will be in demand

if you increase your efficiency by home study under expert guidance. Pitman's famous Postal Courses include: English, Accountancy, Banking, Secretarial Practice, Shorthand, Economics, Modern Languages, and subjects of general education. Write to-day for free booklet, "Home Study—the Key to Success."

PITMAN'S SCHOOL, 217, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

LABODEX SANITARY KNICKERS

PATENT 8314/12

Dainty. Reliable. Washable. Absolutely Waterproof.
A BOON TO LADIES.
In Nainsook, trimmed lace,
3 sizes, **5/11.** Postage 3d.
Also in **CAMBRIC 7/6, CELLULAR 10/6, JAP SILK 10/6 & 12/6, CRÊPE de CHINE 18/6 & 21/-**
Avoid disappointing imitations.
If unobtainable locally write to Inventor,
MADAME CLAIRE DE LACOTE
(Dept. 3), 17, Church Road, Barnes, S.W.13

ART FASHION DRAWING.

LEARN THIS INTERESTING ART AND EARN BIG MONEY
POSTER, BLACK AND WHITE, STORY ILLUSTRATING also taught. LESSONS GIVEN at Studios Morning, Afternoon or Evening, or by post. Help given to good positions. Sketches bought and sold.
Terms:—SECRETARY,
THE COMMERCIAL ART SCHOOL
12 & 13, HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2. *Est.* 1900.

For cleaning Silver, Electro Plate &c.
Goddard's Plate Powder
Sold everywhere 6d 1/ 2/6 & 4/6
J. GODDARD & SONS, Station Street, Leicester.

Himrod's ASTHMA CURE

The standard remedy for over 50 years
Gives instant relief from *Catarrh, Asthma,* etc.
AT ALL CHEMISTS
4s. 6d. a tin

CHIVERS' CARPET SOAP

Cleans Carpets Like New.

One tablet will clean a large carpet. Sold everywhere. Sample 2d. stamp.
F. CHIVERS & CO., Ltd., 1, Albany Works, BATH.

Repair that Broken Fireplace!
Save the risk of FIRE!—No trouble if you use
PLASTIC FIRE CEMENT
Purimachos
Ask your Ironmonger for it.
3lb. sample tin, **1/9** post free, with full particulars from
PURIMACHOS LTD., 16, St. Philip's, BRISTOL.

NERVOUS FEARS

How many people fear meeting others, travelling in Trains, Trams, Tubes, or Buses, mixing in Society, going into a Restaurant, or of having anything important to do? Such Nervous Fears are ruination to any man or woman's chance of success in life. Become Nerve-Strong, Self-Confident, Bright and Happy by sending immediately 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. GUARANTEED CURE OR MONEY REFUNDED.
GODFRY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 491, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.

RHEUMATISM CURED.

To further advertise our marvellous **Galvanic Ring,** which absolutely cures **Rheumatism, Sleeplessness, Neuralgia, Gout, Nervous Disorders,** and all kindred complaints, we have decided to give a quantity away. Write to-day for size card, testimonials, particulars of free offer, &c.—

GALVANIC RING CO. (Dept. 36), Kew, London.

The "Titan" Air Pistol

A magnificent little weapon; quick, silent action. The strongest Shooting Air Pistol ever made. New departure from the cheap feeble shooting foreign-made article. Cannot be surpassed for target and bird shooting. Packed with supply of darts and slugs. The Improved "Titan," price **25/-.** Direct from makers:—

25/-

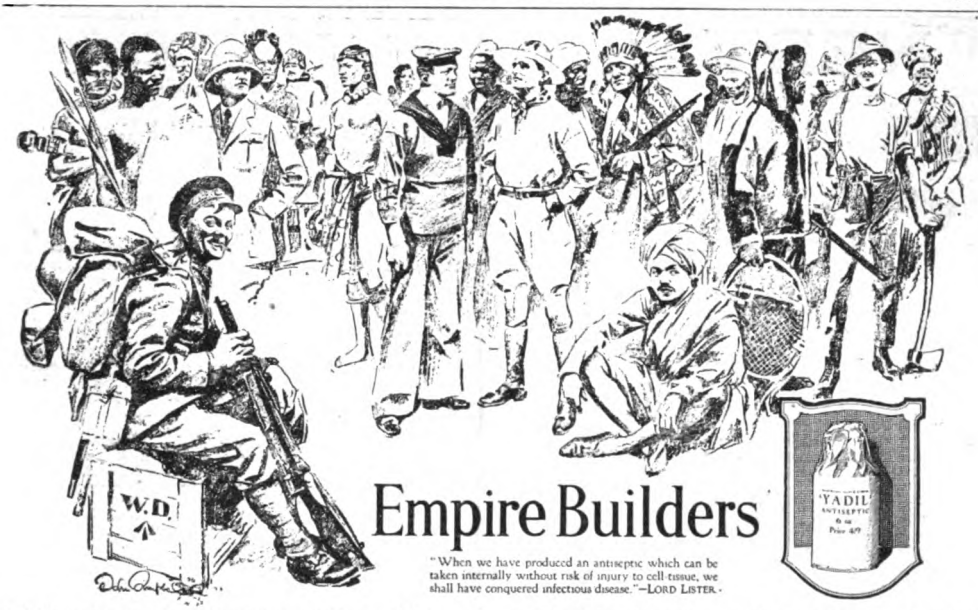
FRANK CLARKE (Record Dept.), 6, Whittall Street, Birmingham.
List of Air Guns, etc., free. Be sure to address 'Record' Dept.

STAMMERING

YOU may be **really clever,** you may have **natural aptitude** for organization and control, you may have all the qualities that make one **attractive in society** and **successful in business,** but **because you stammer** you never get a chance to prove your worth. *You need not be "gagged" any longer.* By a very simple private home method you can be cured of **Stammering or Stuttering in 40 days.** Full particulars will be sent free privately if you write at once and mention *Strand Magazine.* Address—
D. M. Burton, 5, Ressendale Rd., St. Anne's-on-Sea

HEIGHT INCREASED
IN 30 DAYS.

5/- **COMPLETE COURSE.**
NO APPLIANCES. NO DRUGS. NO DIETING.
The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS
Full particulars & Testimonials—Stamp, or complete course by return of post for 5/- P.O.
Melvin S. Strong, Ltd., 10, Ludgate Hill, London.



Empire Builders

"When we have produced an antiseptic which can be taken internally without risk of injury to cell-tissue, we shall have conquered infectious disease."—LORD LISTER.

BOLD explorers and hardy pioneers, gallant soldiers and intrepid sailors, keen business men and skilled craftsmen, far-seeing statesmen and wise administrators—all have played their part in the building of the British Empire. Adventure and daring have laid its foundations; pluck, doggedness and ability have made it grow; common ideals of right and freedom have cemented it into a spiritual whole.

SUCH are the men, such are the qualities of brain and heart, that have gone to the making of our Commonwealth of Nations. The whole can be summed up in this, that the qualities which mark the empire-maker are pre-eminently those that mark the healthy man. First, therefore, on the long roll of empire-builders must stand Health itself—the greatest empire builder of all. And a place on that roll must be given to anything that helps to maintain health, to prevent wastage of life and effort. In this sense my antiseptic 'Yadil' is a true Empire Builder.

IN spite of the urgent need of all our vital forces, to safeguard our imperial heritage and discharge our duty to civilisation, we waste annually in these islands over one hundred thousand lives which could easily be saved, and nearly fifty thousand more in the Dominions. We squander our wealth in human lives with that recklessness which usually ends in bankruptcy.

I SAY advisedly that we "waste" British lives by the hundred thousand a year, because it is open to everyone, especially in the home country, to use or give my antiseptic 'Yadil' at the first sign of consumption, pneumonia, bronchitis, congestion of the lungs, chill or cold, measles, influenza, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, puerperal fever, diarrhœa, enteritis—to name but a few of the infections which destroy annually in the British Isles over four hundred thousand lives.

WERE it possible to ensure that everyone who suffers from some ailment, be it ever so trivial, was given 'Yadil' at the very first symptoms of disease, we should save far more than one hundred thousand lives a year.

MY antiseptic makes possible, for the first time in the history of man, the complete disinfection of the human body without risk of injury to the most delicate internal organs.

THE action of 'Yadil' is very simple. It removes, within the body, or in wounds and sores, the very cause of the trouble that one suffers from. It makes no mistake in diagnosis, and does its work with accuracy, whether it be given for pneumonia, diphtheria, malaria, or used for erysipelas, gangrene, blood poisoning, ulcerated legs, or what not. It seldom fails.

NO preparation has ever been tested so thoroughly as 'Yadil' before being offered to the public. I kept it exclusively for the medical profession for nearly six years. In THE YADIL BOOK I publish a formidable array of medical reports. I would have kept 'Yadil' indefinitely for the profession, had it not been for the pressure of many doctors who, having used it with amazing success, urged repeatedly that it was my duty to make it known to the public.

IF everyone who has benefited from 'Yadil' will kindly tell their friends about it, it will hasten the day when the whole nation takes advantage of its life-saving properties. An additional one hundred thousand settlers could then be saved every year.

FOR the sake of your health and that of those who are near and dear to you, order to-day from your chemist a supply of 'Yadil' and a copy of THE YADIL BOOK. With these always ready at hand, you will be able to keep disease and premature death from your home.

Alex Clement

A copy of THE YADIL BOOK will be sent, post free, to any home or foreign address on receipt of 2/6—or you may get it from your chemist.

'YADIL' ANTISEPTIC

Ensures the complete internal disinfection of the human system without risk of injury to the most delicate cell-tissue.
***Prepared by* Clement & Johnson Limited, *Research Medical Chemists*, 19, Sicilian Avenue, London, W.C.1.**

Liquid	2 oz. **2/9**	6 oz. **4/9**	Pint **12/-**	Quart **22/6**
Pills	50 **2/9**	150 **4/9**	500 **12/-**	1,000 **22/6**
Ointment	1 oz. **1/9**	4 oz. **5/-**	**Pastilles** (for the Voice) per tin **1/-**
Lubricant (for the Skin) Collapsible Tubes 2 oz. **1/6**			**Powder** (for the Toilet) in Sprinkler Tins, per tin **1/6**

Of all Chemists and other Stores, or sent direct, post free, on receipt of remittance. For abroad add 3/- for extra postage and packing. Excess money will be refunded.

The word 'YADIL' is registered. W. B. P.

Pronounce it YAH—DIL.

NERVES.

WONDERFUL NEW VITAL FORCE DISCOVERED DURING THE WAR.

Gift Book and Generous Trial Sent Free to All Sufferers.

If you feel weak, restless, debilitated, languid, tired, or sleepless, you are suffering from the result of overwork or nervous strain.

You may have taken tonics, but without improving your condition, simply because you are not attacking the root of the mischief, and are merely trying to relieve local symptoms.

A little book written by a Doctor conveys a message of hope to you—pointing out the path to health. It is yours for the asking.

This free treatise describes the different nervous ailments so prevalent to-day, and gives the history of "VICAPS," a new scientific force discovered by a London Manufacturing Chemist. This preparation has been tried with most successful results in cases of:

NERVOUS DEBILITY, NEURASTHENIA, PROSTRATION, EXHAUSTION, WEAKNESS, and LOSS OF SLEEP.

"Vicaps" are safe. They strengthen the heart, tone up the nerves, build up worn-out tissues, and enrich the blood, revitalising the whole system.

Are you anxious to be well and enjoy life?

If so, send to-day for your copy of the Free Book, with which will be sent you a generous trial package of "Vicaps," so that you may test at our expense this new scientific aid to Nature. Send no money—just your name, address, and ailment to—

STEPHEN MATTHEWS & CO., LTD (Dept. V.1), 19-21, FARRINGDON ST., LONDON, E.C.4.

WHY SUFFER?

miseries through

Neurasthenia	Liver Troubles	Rheumatism
Headache	Exophthalmic Goitre	Gout
Megrim	Diabetes	Acne
Spinal Troubles	Heart Troubles	Nasal Catarrh
Neuralgia	Arterio-Sclerosis	Throat Affections
Constipation	Angina Pectoris	Bronchitis
Indigestion	Varicose Veins	Asthma
Mucous Colitis	Piles	Stone in Kidneys

and many other

Chronic Kidney, Bladder or Prostate Complaints, when these maladies can be quickly relieved and finally cured by

'SYSTEMATIC' HOMŒOPATHY

If you have taken the usual prescriptions, tried many patent medicines, and are still uncured, order at once and read without delay

'EVERYDAY CHRONIC MALADIES'

Their Causes, Course, and Cure.
By MAURICE ERNEST, LL.D.,
Homœopathic Consultant.

Nearly 200 pages Illustrated, 10th Edition, **2/-**

The author, Dr. Maurice Ernest, of 93, Cromwell Road, London, is an unorthodox medical man who has given more thought to, and thanks to his large practice gained more experience in, the treatment of Everyday Chronic Maladies than any living authority. His book will show you how Systematic Treatment can cure almost any Chronic Ailment. Thousands of Chronic Sufferers have been benefited by reading "*Everyday Chronic Maladies.*"

Send at once 2/- (Postal Order or Stamps) to the Publishers, **M. A. ADAM & CO., 85, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1,** and the book will arrive, post free, by return; or order it at the nearest bookstall. Foreign or Colonial stamps accepted.

TWILIGHT SLEEP NURSING HOMES

Twilight Sleep painless Maternity is a boon which should be accorded to every mother and child. Prospective parents are invited to call or write for Illustrated Booklet of the leading Twilight Sleep Home in Great Britain. Resident physician. Best equipped. Most comfortable. Ten acres of beautiful grounds. Chalet for husbands and visiting friends. *Recommended by Medical Profession.* *Telephone: Kingston 1807.*

MATRON (B.L.), BUSHEY LODGE, TEDDINGTON, MIDDLESEX.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH MARRIAGE?"

THIS question was asked the other day by one of England's foremost divines. Are those who fail in marriage wicked, selfish, or exceptionally difficult to please? In the majority of cases they are none of these things, but when entering matrimony they were ignorant of many things necessary to be known.

Racial health and the progress of civilization are so obviously dependent upon wise and happy marriage, that it is surely criminal to allow men and women to approach it in this spirit of ignorance and unpreparedness; and to dispel ignorance and encourage a definite preparation for parenthood, Dr. Courtenay Beale has written two kindly, frank and important books which should be in the hands of every married couple and those contemplating marriage.

"WISE WEDLOCK" AND "THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE"

Each **6/9**, *post free, or the two for* **12/6**

The first deals with the subject of birth control, and the second is a complete guide to adult men and women. Their informative contents are presented with infinite tact, sympathy, and a genuine desire to help, and were every young couple to take to heart the lessons of these invaluable guide-books the divorce courts might take a long vacation. *Send Cheque or P.O. now, and the books will reach you by return post, together with a specimen copy of "Health and Efficiency" Monthly Magazine.*

HEALTH PROMOTION, LTD.,
39, Efficiency House, Paternoster Square, E.C.4.

Full catalogue of books and specimen copy of "Health and Efficiency" post free on application.

Eczema.

PSORIASIS, BAD LEGS and all skin diseases completely and permanently cured by

KUREM HOME TREATMENT

famous over 30 years. Entirely herbal, inexpensive, yet cures when doctors and hospitals fail. Send postcard for free book, sent under plain wrapper, which tells you how to begin your own certain cure at home.—**J. ROBINSON & SONS, 18, KUREM HOUSE, BRADFORD.**

And when Neuralgia causes racking shocks

Just take a Zox and get quick relief. Send 1½d. stamped addressed envelope for Two Free Powders to test. Chemists sell ZOX Powders in boxes at 1/6 & 3/-. If unobtainable locally write THE ZOX CO., 11, Hatton Garden, London, E.C. 1.

The simplest safest quickest cure is

ZOX

TO GET THIN QUICKLY

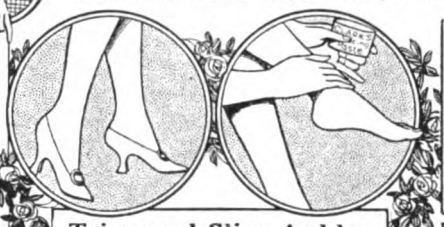
adopt this Rapid French Home Treatment.

CLARK'S REDUCING BATHS.

TO ladies who wish to regain girlish slightness and willowy grace quickly and without fatigue, this Special Offer is made of a **Complete Home Treatment comprising 12 Packets of Clark's Thinning Bath Salts, a large Pot of Clark's Reducing Paste, and a Bottle of Laxative Thinning Pastilles.** If you would regain the true beauty of a slim figure, write to-day to the address below, sending **20/-** only for ALL THREE PREPARATIONS. Clark's Thinning Bath Salts are delightfully perfumed and wonderfully refreshing. *The Sole British Agents:*

Heppells **Chemists, 164, Piccadilly, London, W.1.**
And at Brighton.

COLONIAL AGENTS:—South Africa—Lennon, Limited. India—Smith, Stanistreet & Co.



Clark's Thinning Bath Salts

Trim and Slim Ankles
are ensured by using
CLARK'S REDUCING PASTE
Results guaranteed. Per Pot **5/6.**

SPHERE SUSPENDERS

Hi! Stop the Band!
A Lady has dropped her Suspender

LADIES Ask your Draper for "Sphere" Suspenders with the Oval-Octo Button. The "Sphere Oval-Octo" will not tear your finest hose. CANNOT CAUSE LADDERS.

GENTLEMEN Ask your Outfitter for "Sphere" Braces and the "Sphere Broadway" Garter. The "Sphere Broadway" Garter for men is a new "Sphere" speciality, made of 1¼" wide "springeasy" elastic. It is most comfortable in wear, and will not cause varicose veins.

"Sphere" goods are noted for Quality—Finish—and—Reliability.
"SPHERE" SUSPENDERS—BRACES—GARTERS.
Manufactured by Faire Bro's. & Co. Ltd., Leicester

WOOD BROS. MATERNITY WEAR.

As supplied to Royalty and Society.
TAILORED TO MEASURE.

Wood Bros. Ltd., Maternity Wear Specialists, have a fascinating choice of charming coat frocks suitable for all Summer wear. Their **self-adjusting Regd. MAITURNUS Band** is fitted into every waistband. Preserves graceful and normal appearance. Write for catalogue to Manageress. **Prices: Skirts from 14/11, Coat Frocks from 55/6, Costumes from 63/-, Accouchement Sets from 14/11, Maternity Belts 12/6, Complete Layettes from 35/-, Maternity Corsets from 8/11. Full satisfaction or money refunded. Wood Bros. also supply everything for Baby from Birth.**

The "Jeanne" Graceful—Simple.

WOOD BROS., Ltd., 14, St. Mary's Street, Manchester. *(Original Inventors of Maternity Wear.)*

BAILEY'S ELASTIC STOCKINGS

For VARICOSE VEINS
90 years' reputation for
BEST QUALITY AND COMFORT
"VARIX," all about Elastic Stockings, how to wear, clean, and repair them, post free.
Special Department for Ladies.
Manufacturers of TRUSSES and ABDOMINAL BELTS.
Catalogue post free.
38, OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.1.

PLAYER'S NAVY CUT

Tobacco & Cigarettes

P.1059

QUICK POSTAL SERVICE

YOUR ROLL FILMS DEVELOPED AND PRINTED. RETURNED FOLLOWING DAY.

Prints Neatly Masked—Special Glazed Surface.

V.P.K. Nos. 0, 1 and 2, Brownie size 1/- post free.
1A, ¼-plate, 3¼ x 3¼ ..... 1/6 „ „
2C, 5 x 4, P.C. ..... 2/- „ „
1d., 1½d. and 2d. respectively returned for each negative not printable. FILMS with P.O. to :—**HINES,**

Photographic Chemists, 86, High Street, WHITECHAPEL, E.1.

YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACE

But Your Nose?

BEFORE. AFTER.

Above illustration represents my "Trade Mark" and shows my first and oldest Nose Shaper. It is not a replica of my latest superior Model No. 25.

IN THIS DAY and AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "*looks*," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. **PERMIT NO ONE TO SEE YOU LOOKING OTHERWISE**; it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny?

My newest greatly improved superior *Nose-Shaper*, "Trados Model 25," British Patent, corrects all ill-shaped noses without operation quickly, safely, comfortably and permanently. Diseased cases excepted. Model 25 is the latest in Nose Shapers, and surpasses all my previous Models by a large margin. It has six adjustable pressure regulators, is made of light polished metal, is firm, and fits every nose comfortably. The inside is upholstered with a fine chamois, and no metal parts come in contact with the skin. Being worn at night, it does not interfere with your daily work. Thousands of unsolicited testimonials on hand.

Write to-day for free booklet which tells you how to correct ill-shaped Noses without cost if not satisfactory.

M. TRILETY, Face Specialist,
307, Rex House, Hatton Garden, E.C.1

WHY BE TOO FAT?

REGAIN YOUR HEALTH AND BEAUTY

and reduce your weight quickly by commencing the never-failing Antipon Treatment NOW. It has 22 years reputation, and is the only safe, sure and pleasant remedy for over-stoutness. No change of diet, but a reduction of 8 oz. to 3 lb. in a single day and night.

Your Chemist Sells It.

Sold in powder and liquid, by Boots (600 branches), and all Chemists & Stores the world over. Price 3/- and 5/-, or powder form in plain wrapper direct from the

ANTIPON CO. (Desk No. 3), **82, St. Thomas St., S.E.1,**

Antipon

DRINK HABIT CONQUERED.

No more misery. Get rid of the Drink Habit in 3 days.

After being a heavy drinker for years, I **was saved,** and providentially came into possession of the true method for overcoming **inebriety.** The drinker who wants to **stop for ever,** getting rid of the awful desire for alcohol, can easily do so, losing no time and enjoying life better than ever before. **Marvellous Success.** Safe, reliable, medically endorsed.

DRINKERS SECRETLY SAVED.

If a person is addicted so strongly that he has lost desire to be rescued, he can be treated **secretly;** will become disgusted with odour and taste of liquor. Legions of **Testimonials** verifying genuineness of my method. **Joyous news** for drinkers and for **wives, mothers,** etc., contained in my **Book.** Sent in plain wrappers, FREE. Keep this advertisement or pass it on.

Write to-day to **EDWARD J. WOODS, Ltd.,**
167, Strand (353 C.H.), LONDON, W.C.2.

Languages & Sciences Simplified

The Simplified Home Studies in Languages and Sciences originated 17 years ago by the Rev. J. C. Wilcox, M.A. (St. John's College, Cambridge), have changed the acquisition of knowledge from an irksome task into a real pleasure.

By this System of teaching (a scientific adaptation of old and new methods), you can take up one or more subjects and study them at home in your own time. There is no time limit. No text books are required: the S.S.S. tuition papers would become your own property. Your work would be under the direction of scholars who are expert in their own subjects and would take a personal interest in your progress. No previous knowledge of any subject is required. You can begin to study at once.

The subjects taught by the S.S.S. are:
FRENCH
SPANISH
ENGLISH
LATIN
LOGIC
PSYCHOLOGY
ECONOMICS
ARABIC
HEBREW
CREEK (N.T.)

A STUDENT WRITES:—*"I gather this is the end of the Course, so am sending in my last papers with regret that it is finished. I have enjoyed it all very much indeed, and shall hope to take another Course next year."* Thousands of unsolicited letters of appreciation can be seen at the offices of the S.S.S. on application to the Secretary.

Write at once for particulars, mentioning the subject or subjects in which you are specially interested. FREE TEST LESSONS, taken from the Course, will be sent by the Secretary.

SCHOOL OF SIMPLIFIED STUDY, Ltd.,
59, St. Paul's Chambers, 19-21, Ludgate Hill, LONDON, E.C.4.

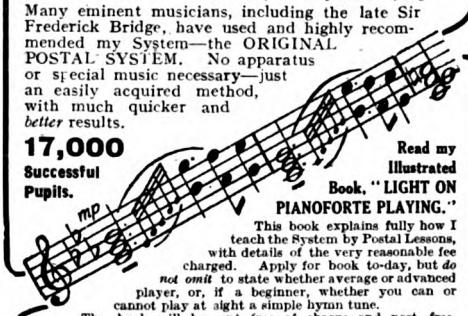
Break Away from the Old Senseless 'Practising'

DID you ever stop to think how hopelessly out-of-date is the old method of teaching the piano? Constant practising is supposed to be indispensable—but what is it? Merely a short-sighted attempt to bludgeon the mind into insensibility, and to get the muscles to act automatically. By eliminating the old senseless "practising" which has ruined many a budding musician, the EASY SYSTEM—**"From Brain to Keyboard"**—which *Musical News* describes as "the most striking discovery of the present generation for practical musicians," shows you how to turn pianoforte playing into a fascinating, easy study, free from all the drudgery of old-fashioned "practice."

From Brain to Keyboard

Macdonald Smith's System of Pianoforte Playing.

Many eminent musicians, including the late Sir Frederick Bridge, have used and highly recommended my System—the ORIGINAL POSTAL SYSTEM. No apparatus or special music necessary—just an easily acquired method, with much quicker and *better* results.



17,000 Successful Pupils.

Read my Illustrated Book, "LIGHT ON PIANOFORTE PLAYING."

This book explains fully how I teach the System by Postal Lessons, with details of the very reasonable fee charged. Apply for book to-day, but *do not omit* to state whether average or advanced player, or, if a beginner, whether you can or cannot play at sight a simple hymn tune.

The book will be sent free of charge and post free.

J. Macdonald Smith, 19, Bloomsbury Sq., London, W.C.1

TAYLORS for TYPEWRITERS

LET ERIKA BE YOUR TIRELESS SECRETARY

ALL MAKES on HIRE, HIRE PURCHASE, VERY EASY TERMS, BOUGHT, SOLD, REPAIRED and EXCHANGED.

WHY NOT BUY AN ERIKA FOR 5/- PER WEEK?
RAPID DUPLICATORS, ADDERS AND CALCULATORS.
Write for TERMS & BARGAIN LIST No. 11.

The Portable DE LUXE VISIBLE Writer in Two Colours. Complete in neat Travel Case. **£14 14s.**

TAYLORS, Ltd., 74, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.
Est. 1884. NEW & SECONDHAND OFFICE FURNITURE. Tel.: Holborn 4810—4 lines.

SIMON Keable's Great Novel CALLED PETER

3/6 NET

METAL LIMBS

For particulars of the Finest Metal Artificial Limbs procurable, most comfortable, lightest yet strongest, write for our booklet. Highest testimonials, and every limb guaranteed. Nothing experimental. Our productions are in use in all parts of the world, with uniform success.

Inventors and Only Makers,

A. E. McCLEAN & SONS, 37, Aldwych, London, W.C.2

'PHONE: GERRARD 7664.

THE FOSTER COLD MEDAL KNITTER

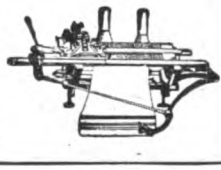
Provides PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT for Home or Business.

This machine makes the fashionable knit goods for outdoor wear so greatly admired, Stockings, Socks, Sports Coats, Jumpers, Scarves, and Underclothing. Awarded 28 Medals. Easily learnt. Over 12,000 sold. Established 1861. Write for

Cash, Hire, or Work Terms. Wools Wholesale. Samples Free.

W. & J. FOSTER (Dept. H.), Market Street Works, PRESTON.

Australian Agents: The Foster Knitter Co., 26-30, Jamieson Street, Sydney.



HAIR-GROWING DISCOVERY

I was bald. My hair grew anew as shown in the portrait.

Many persons—both men and women—who were completely **bald** have grown a full crop of beautiful hair by compound used by American Indians. This contains genuine bear oil, juice of the rare pilocarpus plant, and other potent ingredients.

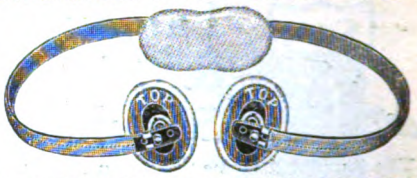
Marvellous and speedy growth of hair has been reported even when falling hair, dandruff and baldness have existed for years.

A testing box of KOTALKO may be obtained by sending threepence in stamps to

JOHN HART BRITTAIN, Ltd., 2, Percy Street (201BT), London, W.1.

KOTALKO
TRUE HAIR GROWER

ESTABLISHED FOR OVER 100 YEARS.



SALMON ODY Patent BALL AND SOCKET TRUSSES

are still unapproachable in efficiency for all cases of Hernia; and they still enjoy that confidence throughout the Medical Profession which has made them so famous for over 100 years. Those wearing any other form of Truss, especially Elastic or Web Trusses, are invited to write to-day and prove for themselves the unique superiority of the Salmon Ody Patent Ball and Socket Truss.

Particulars Post Free.

SALMON ODY, Ltd., 7, New Oxford St., W.C.

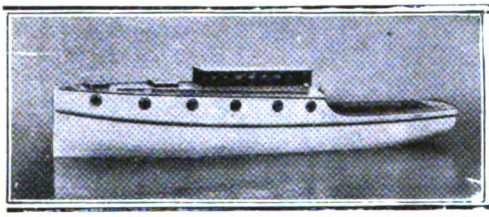
Save Time and Money by Learning

DUTTON'S 24 HOUR SHORTHAND

Only 6 Rules and 29 Characters.

A Knowledge of Dutton's Shorthand will enable you to EARN MORE MONEY. Complete Theory Learned in 24 Hours. Send Stamp for FIRST LESSON FREE to—

DUTTON'S COLLEGE (Desk H), SKEGNESS.
(London: 92 and 93, Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1)



MOTOR CABIN CRUISERS, CAMPING SKIFFS AND PUNTS

for SALE or HIRE, with complete equipment.

STEAM AND MOTOR LAUNCHES

and all types Pleasure and Racing Boats to Let or for Sale.

CANADIAN CANOES. *Lists on application.*

SALTER BROS., LTD., 20, Folly Bridge, OXFORD.

TOBACCO HABIT

Conquered in 3 Days.

I offer a genuine guaranteed Remedy for tobacco or snuff habit. It is mild, pleasant, strengthening. For either sex. **Overcome that peculiar nervousness and craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, or snuff. It is unsafe and torturing** to attempt to rid yourself of tobacco or snuff habit by suddenly stopping by will power; don't do it. The correct method is to **eliminate the nicotine poison** from the system, strengthen the weakened, irritated membranes and nerves, and genuinely overcome the craving. You can give up tobacco and enjoy yourself a thousand times better, while feeling always in robust health. My FREE book tells about the **wonderful three days' method.** Legions of testimonials. Inexpensive, reliable. **Book on Tobacco and Snuff Habit,** sent in plain wrappers, FREE on request. Write to-day. Address — **EDWARD J. WOODS, Ltd., 167, Strand. (353 T.E.G.), LONDON, W.C.2.**

BOOK FREE

HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Wonderful results. Over 12 years' unblemished reputation. Send postcard for particulars and our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept. S.M., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N.4

Are You Deaf?

If so, you can be relieved by using

WILSON'S COMMON-SENSE EAR-DRUMS

A new scientific invention, entirely different in construction from all other devices. Assist the deaf when all other devices fail, and where medical skill has given no relief. They are soft, comfortable, and invisible; have no wire or string attachment.

WRITE FOR PAMPHLET. Mention this Magazine.

Wilson Ear-Drum Co. *British Agent,* D. H. WILSON, 19, Chesser Gardens, EDINBURGH

BOW LEGS. ARE YOU BOW-LEGGED?

Without.

IF so, why not wear the B.L. APPLIANCE? (worn like an ordinary garter) and cease to worry about people looking at your legs. This wonderful invention not only makes the trousers hang straight but does it in such an ingenious way that your own friends forget, and others never know that you are bow-legged.

With.

HUNDREDS OF TESTIMONIALS.

Write now for **FREE** *illustrated booklet (S.M.) sent in plain, sealed envelope to:—*

THE B.L. APPLIANCE CO., Saffron House, 23, Charterhouse Street, London, E.C.1.

"My RHEUMATISM has Completely Gone"

1, Argyle Street, Birkenhead.

Dear Sirs,—I contracted a severe attack of Rheumatism. It became so painful that it was agonizing to use the necessary gestures illustrating my songs. I tried several remedies without obtaining relief until I was recommended **Urace.** I cannot speak too highly of the benefits received. The Rheumatism has completely gone. I shall always recommend it to my brother and sister professionals.—Yours sincerely,

Lena Carroll, Comedienne.

URACE, and URACE alone, can cure Rheumatism. It directly attacks the cause—uric acid—dissolves and expels it from the system and prevents its reappearance. That is why it CURES, and CURES QUICKLY. **1/3, 3/- and 5/-** per box from Boots, Timothy Whites & Co, Taylors and all Chemists and Stores, or direct from the **URACE Laboratories. 82, St. Thomas Street, S.E.1.**

URACE TABLETS

1/3, 3/- & 5/-
BOOTS and all CHEMISTS

"Don't Lose your Spirit"—what a true British phrase,
No matter what comes or what goes;
For FLUXITE is famous (and none will disclaim us)
If we say it ends soldering woes.

IT is no idle boast to say that there is only one thing in this world that ends soldering woes, and that's FLUXITE. In the old "Spirits of Salts" days, mechanics and the "handy-man-about-house" found soldering beyond a joke; but FLUXITE has altered all that, and it now stands unrivalled as the world's greatest soldering flux.

ALL MECHANICS WILL HAVE

FLUXITE

because it

SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

All Hardware and Ironmongery Stores sell FLUXITE in tins. Price **8d., 1/4,** and **2/8. BUY A TIN TO-DAY.** Ask your Ironmonger or Hardware Dealer to show you the neat little

Fluxite Soldering Set

It is perfectly simple to use, and will last for years in constant use. It contains a special "small space" Soldering Iron with non-heating metal handle, a Pocket Blow-Lamp, FLUXITE, Solder, etc., and full instructions. Price **7/6.** Write to us should you be unable to obtain it.

FLUXITE, LTD., 160, Bevington Street, Bermondsey, Eng.

Price **7/6**

For the tool-kit of your car or motor-cycle or any soldering jobs about the home.

ACHING FEET, CORNS, Etc.? —ONE DIP

In the medicated and oxygenated foot bath, prepared by adding REUDEL BATH SALTRATES to plain water.

THAT'S ALL.

Without oxygen, even life itself could not exist, and the science of medicine has perfected many uses for its wonderful refreshing, healing and antiseptic properties. When sore, tender feet burn, smart and swell, or when the arches tire and ache so every step means such pain that you fear fallen arches, just try resting the feet for a few minutes in the medicated and oxygenated water produced by adding a handful of the Reudel Bath Saltrates compound to a foot-bath. See how quickly this refreshes tender skin, while it draws all the pain and soreness out of aching muscles or sensitive joints. The real and lasting foot comfort is so gratifying that no one can fully appreciate such amazing effects until he has actually felt them himself. The feet will soon be rendered so strong and healthy that they prove capable of bearing any reasonable strain ever likely to be placed upon them.

High medical authorities advise the use of saltrated water to cure foot troubles, and C. S. Turner, formerly of the R.A.M.C., recently stated that he was unable to obtain the same immediate and satisfactory results in any other way. He even found that saltrated water could be used for "trench feet" with excellent effects due to the antiseptic properties of this remarkable medicated and oxygenated water. Therefore, speaking from my own experience and from others as well, I do not hesitate to say that no one, however many other methods of treatment he may have tried without success, need now feel discouraged, nor consider that there is any real necessity for limping about on feet hardly able to bear his weight.—H. G. C.

NOTE.—The saltrated water referred to above is prepared by dissolving a heaping tablespoonful of Reudel Bath Saltrates in a gallon of water. This is the registered name by which medical men prescribe the compound, and all chemists keep it put up in packets of convenient sizes, which sell at very moderate prices.

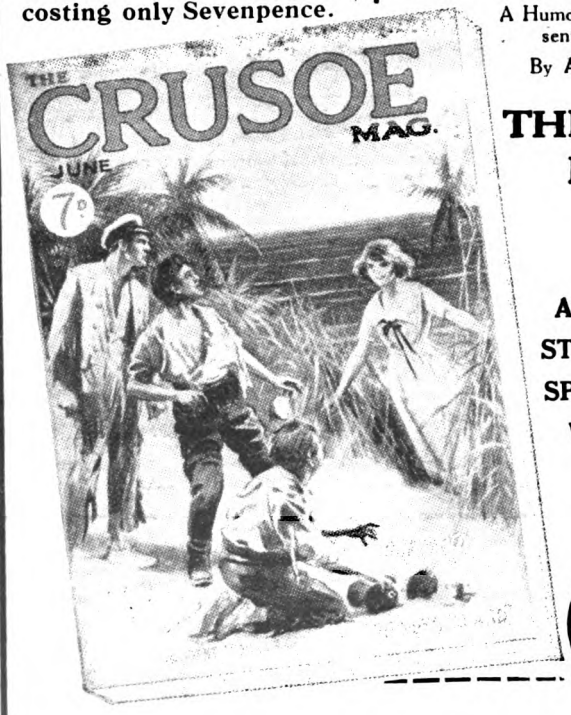
QUICK WITH THE NOSTROLINE FOR COLDS & CATARRH

ALL CHEMISTS 1/3

A New Magazine for the Rising Generation

THE CRUSOE MAG.

You will like this new magazine; brimful of "cheery" stories of adventure, sport, mystery and humour, with a special section "The Bosun's Den," devoted to all kinds of hobbies. A real magazine published every month and costing only Sevenpence.



Contents

THUNDER ISLAND
The Story of Three Adventurous Castaways—not forgetting Jill.
By JOHN HUNTER

POOR DEAR ESME
A Humorous Story of a Boy who is sent to a Girls' School.
By A. M. BURRAGE

THE DETECTIVE REPORTER
A New Series.
By STACEY BLAKE

AND SEVEN COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE, SPORT AND HUMOUR WITH PLENTY OF JOKES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

7D.

No. 1 NOW ON SALE

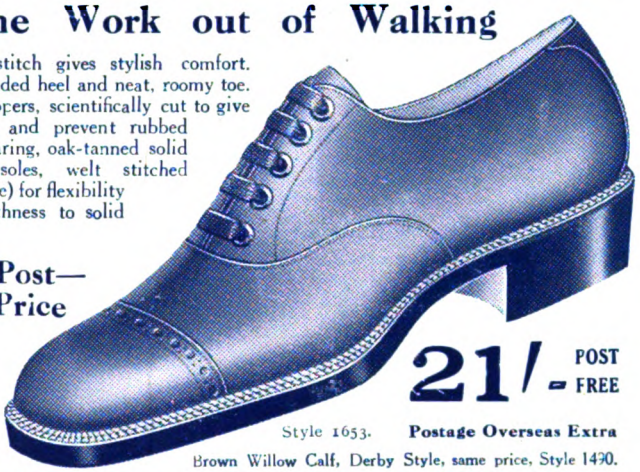
Printed by THE NEWNES & PEARSON PRINTING CO., LTD., N. Kensington, for the Proprietors, GEORGE NEWNES, LTD.

The Shoe for the well-dressed

This model shoe gives gentlemen that satisfaction for which expensive and "exclusive" middlemen charge such high prices. Northampton-made at Barratt's model factory. Sold by post at factory price under firm guarantee of cash refund if it doesn't please you in every detail.

Takes the Work out of Walking

Every inch and stitch gives stylish comfort. Broad-based, extended heel and neat, roomy toe. Black Box Calf uppers, scientifically cut to give close ankle fitting and prevent rubbed heels. Tough-wearing, oak-tanned solid English leather soles, welt stitched (handsewn principle) for flexibility and to give smoothness to solid leather insoles.



Order By Post— at Factory Price

Sizes: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. each medium or wide. State size or send Footshape, pencil outline of foot (in sock) resting on paper with normal pressure. (Size 12 1/- extra.) Enclose cheque or money order for 21/-. Postage overseas extra. C. O. D. orders 10/- deposit only. Post to Factory.

21/- POST FREE

Style 1653. **Postage Overseas Extra**

Brown Willow Calf, Derby Style, same price, Style 1490.

W. BARRATT & CO., LTD., 25, Footshape Works, NORTHAMPTON

Send 3d. (postage) for Barratt's 162-page Illustrated Catalogue.

THE MOTOR CYCLE WITH THE STRONGEST FRAME

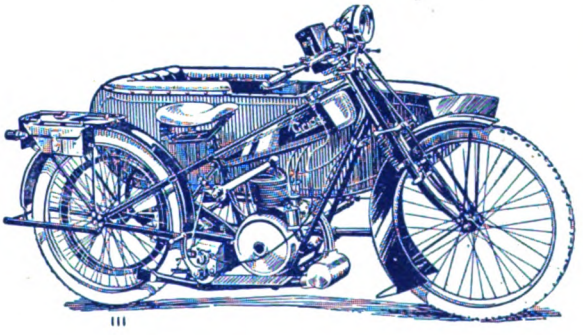
THE

Grigg

3½ h.p. COMBINATION.

3-speed Sturmey-Archer Gear, Clutch and Kick Starter, Electric Lighting, Dunlop Tyres. Ready for the road.

£67 : 10 : 0



BEFORE ORDERING YOUR NEW MODEL, WRITE FOR BOOKLET "K," SHOWING FULL RANGE OF SIZES AT REDUCED PRICES. THE GRIGG MACHINES REPRESENT THE BEST POSSIBLE VALUE FOR MONEY.

GRIGG LIMITED,

SANDERSTEAD WORKS, SOUTH CROYDON.

London Office & Export Dept., 45, Newman Street, W.1.

Playing for safety

is always wise where health is concerned. When father comes home, mother hints at a quick wash with Lifebuoy before the romp, then there will be no danger from the germ-laden dust and grime of the crowded city. Mother isn't fussy. She's very sensible. She knows that cleanliness with Lifebuoy Soap is the best possible step anyone could take towards health.

The name LEVER on Soap is a Guarantee of Purity and Excellence

LIFEBUOY SOAP

L 258—23

LEVER BROTHERS LIMITED, PORT SUNLIGHT.

463 JUN 4

3 9015 05541 0677